

ETERNAL SECURITY & ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

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C. H. Spurgeon is quoted as saying that he was so sure of his salvation that he could grab on to a cornstalk and swing out over the fires of hell, look into the face of the devil, and sing, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!"

- **SCRIPTURAL assurance is related to Bible facts and is based upon the:**

- **Penalty that was paid** (Rom. 6:23 – “the wages of sin” with Gal. 3:13 – “being made a curse for us”; 1 Cor. 15:3 – “Christ died for our sins”; Matt. 1:21; Isa. 53:3, 10; John 19:30 - “It is finished” – *the penalty was paid, the redemptive price is accepted by God, which means I can do nothing to secure my salvation - Jesus paid it all!*),
- **Pardon of God** (Eph. 1:7 – “the forgiveness of sins”; 4:32, Col. 1:14; 2:13; 1 John 2:12; Micah 7:19 – “and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” - *with a sign that reads: “No fishing!”*),
- **Promise of eternal life, salvation, and redemption** (John 3:16; 6:47 – “everlasting life”; 10:28; 1 John 2:25; 5:11-12; 2 Tim. 1:12; Titus 1:2 – “hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began”; Heb. 5:9 – “eternal salvation”; Heb. 9:12 – “eternal redemption”) – “*Once saved, always saved!*”),
- **Personal faith in Christ** (Eph. 2:8-9 – “For by grace are ye saved through faith”; Gal. 3:26 – “children of God by faith in Jesus Christ”; Rom. 10:13; Acts 16:31; Heb. 10:22 – “full assurance of faith”),
- **Purpose of God’s sovereignty** (Rom. 8:28-30 – “the called according to his purpose”; John 17:12; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Tim. 1:9 – *In God’s mind, we have been predestinated, called, justified, and glorified before the earth was ever formed!*),
- **Position in Christ** (Eph. 1:3 – “hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”; Eph. 1:6 – “accepted in the beloved”; 2:5, 13; Rom. 8:1; Heb. 10:14; 1 Cor. 1:2; 30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:3, 9 – “found in him”; Col. 1:21-22; 3:3; Gal. 2:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:10; 3:15; Jude 1 – “preserved in Jesus Christ”),
- **Protected legally through justification** (Rom. 3:22-28 – “justified by faith”; 4:1-8; 5:25; 5:1, 9, 16; 8:30; Gal. 2:16, 24; Titus 3:7 – “justified by grace” Rom. 8:33 - “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? *It is God that justifieth*”),

FREE

GRACE

- **Peace and acceptance before God** (Rom. 5:1 – “we have peace with God”, Rom. 5:10 – “reconciled to God”; Col. 1:20 – “having made peace through the blood of his cross”; Eph. 2:13 – *God accepts us!*),
- **Propitiation of God** (1 John 2:2 – “propitiation for our sins”; Isa. 53:11 – *God is satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ*),
- **Power of God** (1 Pet. 1:5 – “kept by the power of God”; John 10:27-28 – “neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”; 17:12 – “those that thou gavest me I have kept and none of them is lost”; 1 Pet. 2:25 – Bishop of your souls” – *Safe am I, in the hollow of His hand*),
- **Priestly work of Christ** (Hebrews 7:25 – “able to save them to the uttermost ... seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them”; Heb. 9:4 – “to appear in the presence of God for us”; Rom. 5:10 – “saved by his life;” Rom. 8:33-39 – “Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us” – *Christ maintains our salvation before God!*),
- **Past tense of our salvation experience** (1 Pet. 3:24 – “by his stripes ye were healed”; Eph. 2:1 - “who were dead in trespasses and sins” and Eph. 2:5 – “were dead in sins”; Rom. 5:10 - “were reconciled”; 1 Pet. 1:18 – “were ... redeemed ... with the precious blood of Christ” Titus 3:5 and 2 Tim. 1:9 - “he saved us”),
- **Presence of God** (Heb. 13:5 – “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”; Matt. 28:20 – “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” – *When we sin against Him, it does annul the promise that He gave us!*),
- **Parental relationship with God** (John 1:12 – “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God”; Galatians 4:6 - “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father”; 1 John 3:1, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God” – *A son can never lose his biological relationship with his father, the analogy is the same from a spiritual perspective – “Once a son of God, always a son of God!”*),
- **Permanent seal of God** (Eph. 1:13; Eph. 4:30 – “sealed unto the day or redemption” – *Our salvation is signed, sealed, and delivered!*),
- **Preservation of our name in the Book of Life** (Rev. 3:5 – “I will not blot his name out of the book of life”; Luke 10:20 – “your names are written in heaven”),

- **Perpetual birth of God** (John 3:7 – “born again”; 1 John 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:3 – “begotten us again unto a living hope” – *What is true biologically is also true spiritually – “You can’t be unborn!”*),
- **Persistent love of God** (Romans 8:38-39 – “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” – *God loves you with an everlasting and unchanging love!*),
- **Planned reservation for God’s children** - 1 Pet. 1:4 – “To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you”),
- **Particular work of God** (John 1:13 - “born ... of God”; *“It is God that justifieth”* - Rom. 8:33; Jonah 2:9 – “Salvation is of the LORD” – *Salvation is what Christ has done for us – not what we do for Christ!*),
- **Path to Heaven** (John 14:6 – “I am the way”; 1 Pet. 3:18 – “For Christ has suffered for sins ... that he might bring us to God”; Acts 4:12 – “Neither is there salvation in any other” – *Christ is the way to Heaven – not you!*),
- **Proclamation of the grace of God** (the *undeserved, unmerited, unending* kindness and favor of God – Eph. 2:8 - “by grace are ye saved”; 2 Tim. 1:9 – “saved us ... according to his own purpose of grace”; Acts 15:11 – “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved” ; Rom. 3:24 – “justified freely by his grace”; Eph. 1:7 - “the riches of his grace”; Rom. 6:14-15 - “ye are not under law, but under grace”) **GRACE = God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense!**),
- **Preaching against law or legalism** (Eph. 2:8-9 – “that not of yourselves” and “not of works”; Titus 3:5 - “not by works of righteousness which we have done”; 2 Tim. 1:9 - “not according to our works”; Rom. 4:3 - “imputeth righteousness without works”; Rom. 6:14-15 - “ye are not under law, but under grace”; Rom. 3:21 - “without the law”; “Rom. 3:28 – “without the deeds of the law” – *Legalism is obtaining or keeping our salvation based upon human merit or works*),
- **Presentation of the mercy of God** (Titus 3:5 - “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us”; Eph. 2:4-5 - “God, who is rich in mercy ... hath quickened us”; 1 Tim. 1:13, 16 – “but I obtained mercy”; 1 Pet. 1:3 – “according to

his abundant mercy hath begotten us” - **Mercy there was great and grace was free!*

- **Precious gift from God** (Rom. 6:23 - “the gift of God is eternal life”; Eph. 2:8 - “It (salvation) is the gift of God”; Rom. 5:15 - “the free gift” = righteousness; 2 Cor. 9:15 - “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift” - *A gift cannot be earned!*),
- **Partaking of a free grace and Gospel message** (Rev. 22:17 - “take the water of life freely”; Rom. 8:32 - “freely give us all things”; Rom. 3:24 - justified freely by his grace”; Matt. 10:8 - “freely ye have received, freely give”; Isa. 55:1 – “and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price” – *Salvation from start to finish is absolutely free!*),
- **Pronouncement of our liberty in Christ** (Gal. 5:1 – “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” – *Don’t be enslaved to a law/works system that condemns you for sin and failure (Rom. 3:19; 2 Cor. 3:6-7), which causes you to doubt your salvation, and to live in the fear of God’s wrath and judgment).* *Don’t live “**in bondage**” (Gal. 4:9) to a works system that condemns you but can’t save you, one that causes you to doubt your acceptance and salvation before God, a system that creates the fear of hell in your heart and keeps God’s condemnation hanging over your head. **Liberty stems from our security in Christ.** It liberates us from the fear of condemnation, God’s wrath, hell, the burden and weight of sin, and not knowing we are saved. **Be free!** Salvation is free; God is not against you; He is your Father; He no longer condemns you; He accepts and loves you unconditionally and forever since “He that believeth on him (Christ) is not condemned” (John 3:18).

“I’m free from the fear of tomorrow,
I’m free from the guilt of the past,
For I’ve traded all my shackles for a glorious song,
I’m free, praise the Lord free at last.”

SUBJECTIVE assurance is related to man’s ideas, feelings, moods and is:

- **Based upon human works or performance** (“we will do” - Ex. 19:8; Luke 18:18; Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16; 3:10) – **LEGALISM**,

- **Boasting of man's goodness** (Luke 18:21 – “All these have I kept from my youth up”; Rom. 3:12, 23, 27; Eph. 2:9) – **PRIDE**,
- **Bargaining with God** (“What good thing shall I do” - Matt. 19:16) – **LORDSHIP SALVATION**,
- **Blindly comparing oneself with other sinners** (Luke 18:11) – **JUDGMENTALISM**,
- **Believing Christian or church heritage saves** (John 8:33; John 1:13) - **AFFILIATION**,
- **Baptism and rituals instead of Christ** (Acts 15:1; Col. 2:8) - **SACRAMENTALISM**,
- **Being able to confess all known sins before death** (Luke 7:47) – **CONFESSION**.

There is much misinformation and misunderstanding taught regarding confession of sin and salvation. Some clarification needs to be made regarding God's forgiveness as experienced in salvation and in relation to the Christian life.

Confession and Christians: Confession of sin in 1 John 1:9 is for Christians (“My little children” – 1 John 2:1) – not the unsaved. Confession of sin is the basis for restored fellowship with God (Ps. 51:12) – not salvation and justification before God. If a Christian needs to confess his sins in order to have his salvation *restored* before God, this implies he needs do something to EARN and KEEP his salvation, which means he MUST live a certain way, follow some prescribed commands or rules, meet certain conditions for salvation, or else be lost. This results in a legal and condemning relationship with law (“under the law” – Rom. 3:19; Gal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 3:6-7; Rom. 6:23) instead of a *grace* relationship with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 7:3-6).

Law versus Grace: Meritorious theology (salvation by good works) is not found in the Scriptures (Rom. 3:27-28; 4:4-8; Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 2:16; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:5). One does not begin with salvation by grace through faith and then maintain his salvation through meritorious good works and deeds (Gal. 3:1-3). Salvation from *start to finish* is by grace, through faith, and in Christ alone. The two systems (law and grace) oppose one another and cannot coexist together (Gal. 2:21), since the one cancels out the other (Rom. 11:6).

You make a choice to live under law or grace (Rom. 6:14-15; Gal. 5:18) in respect to both *salvation* and *sanctification*. One thing is certain; “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:16) and it's “by the grace of God I am

what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10). Legalism (human effort to gain God’s favor and acceptance) fails on every level, since salvation is “by grace” and “not of works” (Eph. 2:8-9) and since living the Christian life is based upon grace (“grow in grace” - 2 Pet. 3:18).

Salvation and Confession: 1 John 1:9 is not a confession for salvation or justification before God but a confession for restored fellowship with God (1 John 1:7). Belief is the basis for justification – a legal position of acceptance that never changes (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16). The only reason a Christian can have His fellowship restored to God is because the believer is eternally justified before God, since the blood of Jesus Christ maintains our righteous standing of acquittal and forgiveness before God (“justified by his blood” - Rom. 5:9), providing the basis for our everyday forgiveness in relation to the Christian life, which is what John talks about (1 John 1:7, 9).

The blood of Jesus Christ continually cleanses us from sin (1 John 1:7) because Christ is continually declaring by His resurrection life and priestly ministry, the value or efficacy of His sacrifice before the Father. Therefore, upon confession (1 John 1:9), we can have our fellowship restored with God. In short, the blood of Jesus Christ can always provide us with cleansing in our Christian life and restore our communion and fellowship with God (1 John 1:7), since the blood sacrifice of God’s Son has given us eternal acquittal and justification in God’s presence, through Christ’s continuing priestly ministry on our behalf (1 John 2:1; Rom. 8:33-34; Heb. 7:25). God faithfully looks to the blood (the one-time sacrifice of His Son) and restores our fellowship with God based upon our eternal forgiveness, acquittal, and acceptance in God’s presence (1 John 1:9).

Salvation cannot be *conditioned* upon our confession of sin, since Christians who have believed on Christ are already forgiven and acquitted of all their sins in God’s presence forever (1 John 2:12; Col. 2:13) and given a justified, legal standing before God through Christ alone (Rom. 8:34-39). Since this is true, Christians can NEVER lose their salvation and position of acceptance *before* God. However, they can lose fellowship *with* God and this is what needs to be restored. There is a *non-repeatable* forgiveness (“washing of regeneration” - Titus 3:5) that results in our salvation and eternal acceptance before God (Eph. 4:32) and a *repeatable* forgiveness that is needed to restore the believer’s fellowship with God (John 13:9-10; Prov. 28:13).

When God's "children" (1 John 2:1) confess their sins (1 John 1:9), they have an "advocate" or Lawyer and Defender in Heaven (Jesus Christ). Upon confession, Christ restores a Christian's FELLOWSHIP with the Father. Communion with God can be restored because of the eternal efficacy (value) of His blood sacrifice (Rom. 5:9) which *maintains* the Christian's eternal acquittal and justified standing before God (Rom. 5:9), and it's on this basis that forgiveness and fellowship (1 John 1:7) can be restored in the context of the Christian life (1 John 1:9). The forgiveness is necessary so the believer can regain *fellowship* with God but not his salvation and justified standing before God. In essence, our justified standing before God through Christ's blood is not only what keeps us saved and secure, it also is the basis that allows God to restore our fellowship with Himself.

In essence, our eternal, unchanging, justified standing through Christ's death, which is rooted in God's grace (Rom. 3:24), is the basis for our forgiveness in the Christian life, which allows the believer to have his fellowship restored to God. God looks at the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, knows that every one of our sins have ALREADY been forgiven through Christ (Eph. 4:32; Col. 1:14), and on this basis, *He applies the forgiveness we already have and possess in Christ to the Christian's daily experience*, allowing the saint to restore his communion with God. Every spiritual blessing that we have, even our fellowship with the Father, comes through the death of Jesus Christ.

Eternal Security: This reminds us that our eternal security is found in Christ's "finished" work on the cross (John 19:30) which results in "eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:9), "eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12), eternal forgiveness (Eph. 4:32; Rom. 4:7), eternal sanctification (holiness) before God ("perfected for ever them that are sanctified" – Heb. 10:14), and eternal justification and acceptance before God ("righteousness unto eternal life" - Rom. 5:21) through Christ's perfect and unchanging righteousness being applied to our life (Phil. 3:9). All of these spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3) are established forever by Christ's ongoing priestly ministry ("ever liveth to make intercession for them" - Heb. 7:25).

This is why our salvation is secure. It also means that we can have complete confidence in Christ's saving work to grant us eternal salvation and acceptance before God. Our forgiveness and justified standing before God in Heaven never changes because God sees us through Jesus Christ and His saving work accomplished on our behalf (Heb. 7:25). 2 Corinthians 5:21

declares: “For he hath made him (Jesus) *to be* sin for us (substitution - paying the necessary penalty for sin on our behalf), who knew no sin (a sinless substitute); that (result) we might be made the righteousness of God (declared legally righteous in God’s sight) in him” (in Christ – a spiritual location, union, and placement where we share Christ’s saving benefits – Eph. 1:3).

Forgiveness and Faithfulness: These spiritual blessings (salvation, redemption, righteousness, justification, forgiveness, sanctification/holiness) are given to the believing sinner forever through Christ and become the basis for God restoring the Christian’s fellowship with Himself (“he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” – 1 John 1:9). GOD IS FAITHFUL in forgiving and restoring communion with the erring believer, upon confession, since the blood of Jesus Christ has ALREADY provided the believer with eternal forgiveness, justification (a righteous standing), and acceptance in God’s presence (Rom. 5:1, 9), and based upon this amazing act of grace, God applies forgiveness to the confessing Christian, a forgiveness already granted at the cross (Col. 1:20), but a forgiveness, which out of necessity, is *applied* to the Christian’s daily experience (1 John 1:7) in order to restore his personal walk and relationship with God, without restoring his position before God.

God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you” (Exodus 12:13). In the New Testament we discover that the blood of Christ is the righteous basis upon which God can forgive sin in the Christian life. The blood will never lose its power! Because “God is faithful” (1 Cor. 1:9) and trustworthy, He looks back to our complete and eternal forgiveness found in Christ’s shed blood, and on this basis He provides us with forgiveness in our Christian life, restoring our fellowship with Himself. Think of it this way; our daily forgiveness in the Christian life (granting restored fellowship with God) is based upon our justification (a permanent standing of legal forgiveness, righteousness, and acceptance before God). Our initial forgiveness is *soteriological* (sinners securing their eternal salvation and destiny by faith in Christ) while the second type of forgiveness in the Christian life is *relational* (sons restoring their communion with the Father through confession).

God faithfully looks back to our eternal forgiveness which is found in the blood sacrifice of Christ which maintains the believer’s position of acceptance before God (Rom. 5:9; 1 John 1:7), and based upon this truth, God forgives the Christian and restores his walk and fellowship with Himself.

The believer can maintain fellowship with God (“one with another” – 1 John 1:7) because the Father continually looks through the shed blood of Jesus and sees the perfect, justified, legal, righteous standing we have in His presence, and on this basis restores our fellowship with God in the Christian life. The first type of forgiveness involves our *entrance* into the family of God and justification before God (Rom. 5:9). It is POSITIONAL forgiveness before God.

The second type of forgiveness involves our *communion* with God (1 John 1:9; Psalm 51). It is FELLOWSHIP forgiveness. In the second type of forgiveness, there is a personal and daily application of Christ’s death to our lives, so we might experience forgiveness and renewed fellowship with God. The passage of 1 John 1:7 speaks of fellowship forgiveness (“and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”). The word “cleanseth” is in the present tense and means that Christ’s blood keeps on cleansing us from every sin that invades our life and which breaks our fellowship with God.

Of course, forgiveness that occurs in connection with our Christian life is not a *reissuing* of salvation’s forgiveness and justification before God (Heb. 10:1-15) but a practical *application* to our daily Christian experience (1 John 1:7) of the forgiveness we already possess in Christ. When the Christian approaches God and asks for forgiveness of sin (1 John 1:9), the Father looks back to Christ’s death and essentially says, “That’s good enough for Me” and grants the confessing Christian forgiveness, restoring his fellowship with God.

Digging Deeper - Salvation and Family Forgiveness: The Bible clearly teaches that there are two types of forgiveness. There is salvation’s pardon or forgiveness (Eph. 1:7; 4:32, Col. 1:14; 2:13) which brings us into the family of God by making us God’s “sons” (1 John 3:1). This relationship with God, as His Sons, and the forgiveness He provides for them is eternal and unchanging. The judgment for all of our sins has already and eternally been paid for through Christ’s perfect work (Gal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 5:21) and we are now forgiven of all our sins and justified (declared legally righteous) in God’s presence forever. As a result of this amazing display of grace, “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth” (Rom. 8:33). In other words, we are eternally forgiven of all our sins and God no longer holds our sins against us because we have trusted Christ as our Savior. On the basis of this forgiveness (salvation’s eternal forgiveness), we can

confess our sins in the Christian life and find the forgiveness we need (family forgiveness between God and his sons) for restored fellowship.

The Bible makes a clear distinction. There is a forgiveness related to our salvation and justification before God (IT OCCURS ONLY ONCE – 1 John 2:12; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Rom. 4:7) and a forgiveness necessary in the Christian life because of our son relationship with the Father (IT OCCURS MANY TIMES – 1 John 1:9). As the sons of God (John 1:12), our family forgiveness (1 John 1:9) restores our fellowship, communion, and walk with our heavenly Father so we might “have fellowship one with another” (1 John 1:7). God applies the forgiveness, acceptance, and justification we already possess in Christ, to the Christian’s daily experience, allowing the saint to restore his communion with God. First John 1:7 teaches two lessons. First, wading in the light (living a holy life) *maintains* our fellowship with God. Second, the blood of Jesus Christ *restores* our fellowship with God when we do sin. This cleansing comes through confession (1 John 1:9).

The confession and forgiveness that is related to the Christian life CANNOT restore our salvation and justification before God since this has been already secured by Christ (Heb. 5:9; 7:25); therefore, it is only designed to restore our walk and fellowship with God. Belief or faith in Christ is for the purpose of granting our eternal forgiveness and justification before God (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16) whereas confession and forgiveness in the Christian life is for the purpose of restoring our relational walk with the heavenly Father (1 John 1:9).

There are several ways to understand these two types of forgiveness. One is FORENSIC or judicial forgiveness. The Bible teaches this forgiveness happens once and pertains to God’s law and court in Heaven. Through Jesus Christ, the believer is acquitted of all his sins forever and declared legally righteous in God’s presence (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 5:1), or in God’s heavenly courtroom. This occurs at the time of one’s salvation. The second is FAMILY forgiveness which occurs in relation to the Christian life and is repeated many times (1 John 1:9; John 13:10).

The first type of forgiveness is PERPENDICULAR or vertical (pointing up to the throne room of God) and is acquired when we believe on Christ (Acts 26:18). It refers to our elevated POSITION in Christ. This means we can look up to Heaven, where God in His majesty and holiness sits upon the throne, and know we are forgiven forever and possess a legal standing before God in Christ (Heb. 1:3; Eph. 1:3, 2:5). The second type of forgiveness is

HORIZONTAL and is relegated to the plane or level of Christian experience on earth. It refers to the believer's daily PRACTICE of living. We must be forgiven of our sins within our family relationship with God, as His Sons, so we might live in fellowship with Him. The VERTICLE forgiveness before God results in our eternal salvation and acceptance before God's throne because of the believer's blood-bought privilege to enter God's presence (Heb. 10:19-22). The HORIZONTAL forgiveness results in restored fellowship with the Lord here on earth because we want to draw near to God (James 4:8).

Sadly, there are Christians who have not understood about God's amazing grace. God's grace grants us an eternally justified standing in His presence forever (Rom. 3:24; Heb. 7:25), so that we are eternally acquitted of all our sins and accepted in God's presence, and it's on this basis that God can restore our fellowship with Himself (1 John 1:9). When sinning in the Christian life our *fellowship* with God is lost but not our *position* before God. When confessing our sin our fellowship is *regained* and *restored* with God but not our salvation. This is because Jesus Christ "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" – Heb. 7:25). For salvation and justification before God I must "believe" on Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:26; 4:3; Gal. 2:16; 3:24) but for restored fellowship with God I must "confess" my sin (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13).

Standing and State: There is a vast difference between the believer's **STANDING** (his acquittal in the courtroom of Heaven) and **STATE** (the condition of his life on earth). Our standing ("the grace wherein we stand" - Rom. 5:2) as a Christian refers to our acquittal and justification before God "in Christ" (His saving work) and this never changes (Heb. 7:25) but our state does change (we sin and lose fellowship with God – 1 John 2:1). Therefore, must confess our sin to the Father in order to restore communion with God. Understanding the difference between the believer's eternal and unchanging standing (position before God) through Christ's work (Heb. 10:14) and his fluctuating state (practice in life) is the key to possessing Biblical assurance of one's salvation.

God accepts you forever in Christ (Eph. 1:6 – "the beloved" Son) because He sees you eternally forgiven and justified through Christ's person and saving work. "Justified freely through Calvary's love, O what a standing is mine!" God keeps you forever because He views Christ's work as completely satisfying, sufficient, and saving for everyone that believes on His Son. For

this reason, Romans 8:33-39 declares that God justifies and now accepts you forever, loves you forever, and condemns you never! “Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:39).

“My hope is in the Lord Who gave Himself for me,
 And paid the price of all my sin at Calvary.
 No merit of my own His anger to suppress.
 My only hope is found in Jesus' righteousness.

And now for me He stands Before the Father's throne.
 He shows His wounded hands and names me as His own.
 For me He died, For me He lives,
 And everlasting life and light He freely gives”

Below is a summary chart of what we have studied about forgiveness as it relates to salvation and the Christian experience.



Perpendicular
 (Pointing to Heaven)

Forgiveness in Heaven Before the Throne of God
 Occurs only **ONCE** (1 John 2:12; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14)
FORENSIC (legal forgiveness in God's presence)
STANDING in Christ (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 1:6; Jude 1)
POSITIONAL – relating to our position of acceptance in God's presence (righteousness/justification/redemption/sanctification - Rom. 3:24-28; 5:21; 8:1; 33-34; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30; Col. 2:10)
SOTERIOLOGICAL (pertaining to salvation – Titus 3:5)
 Provided through **FAITH** (belief) – Eph. 2:8; Acts 16:31
SECURE & UNCHANGING (SALVATION maintained) - Hebrews 7:25



Horizontal
 (Earthly plane or level)

Forgiveness on Earth for the Christian Life
(Based on our Forgiveness Before the Throne)
 Occurs **MANY** times – John 13:10; 1 John 1:9
FAMILY (forgiveness for God's people – 1 John 2:1)
STATE - Christian experience (1 John 1:3-7)
RELATIONAL (restored fellowship - 1 John 1:7, 9; 2:1)
 Provided through **CONFESSION** (1 John 1:9)
Fluctuating (FELLOWSHIP can be lost and regained – Ps. 51:10-12)
But not our position before the throne

A Prayer of Confession for Regaining Salvation

“Dear God, I’m sorry I must confess my sins once again and have my salvation restored, which I have repeatedly lost because of my disobedience to You. I’m fearful that if I die right now, I would go to hell forever. I sense that the condemnation of my sin is upon me. I suppose I’m frightened because I have not complied with the necessary conditions for salvation which are holy living and sin-free living.

I guess Your Son’s sacrifice, the shedding of His blood to save my soul from hell was not good enough after all, since it could not provide me with eternal forgiveness and save me forever. I suppose that His priestly ministry on my behalf in Heaven, before the Father’s throne, was not capable of securing my salvation forever. I suppose that redemption was not totally “finished” as Jesus said, since I sense my need to confess my sins, be resaved again, born again once again, and escape God’s wrath again.

I suppose my salvation and justification was not free after all, since I find myself constantly striving to comply with a higher standard of living, following the conditions for salvation (good works and holiness), hoping that I don’t lose my salvation and find the need to confess my sins. Well, here I am, lost and going to hell once again. Forgive me so I can go to Heaven again and start all over again, seeking to do my best to live for You again, so I don’t forfeit my salvation and wind up in hell. I confess my sins to You once again so I can have my salvation restored again.”

PS. “I’ll be sure to confess my sin to You again - the next time I am lost. Amen.”

Questions for Searching and Sincere Christians:

Romans 8:33-34 asks: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”

- Why do you condemn yourself, if God does not condemn you? Why do you fear condemnation if God declares He will NEVER condemn you?
- Isn’t Jesus’ intercessory work in Heaven (Heb. 7:25) good enough to maintain your salvation and acceptance before God? Isn’t the

declaration of Christ's sacrifice in Heaven enough to save and keep you forever?

- If God says "nothing can separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" then what can you do to separate yourself from God's amazing love found in Jesus Christ?
- If salvation is conditional, how good must you be to get into Heaven? How bad must you be to go to hell?
- Hebrews 10:19-20 concludes that we can have absolute confidence that God accepts us ("boldness to enter into the holiest") and can draw near to God "by the blood of Jesus" with the "full assurance of faith" that He will not turn us away from His presence. He will always accept for He has forgiven us of all our sins. Isn't God's Word good enough for you? Isn't the blood of Jesus capable of delivering you from a fearful and an "evil conscience" when you remember that Jesus paid for all your sins and provided complete forgiveness for you?
- If all your sins are buried in the deepest depths of the sea (Micah 7:19), providing you with eternal forgiveness, why do you go fishing for them, resurface them, and think that they will bring you into judgment someday? If God can forget your sins, why can't you?
- Is salvation based upon a contract with God where you do your part and God does His part? Must you cooperate with God through good works in order to be saved? If so, how many good works are necessary to fulfill the contract?
- How many sins must you confess to be sure of eternal life? What if you forget to confess one sin or don't know you did something wrong (Lev. 4:2; Numb. 15:24-27) and fail to confess it before you die?
- How many good deeds must you perform to be sure of Heaven?

- What is the ratio of “good” versus “bad” things one must do to be lost and end up in hell? Who determines this ratio and sets the standard?
- What percentage of your life must you yield to God in order to be saved – 50, 60, 70, 80, 99 or 100%?
- Since salvation is by grace alone and “not of works” (Eph. 2:8-9), or “not by works of righteousness which we have done” (Titus 3:5), then how can someone merit or maintain his salvation by performing good deeds or works?
- Jesus said “I AM THE WAY” (John 14:6) to Heaven. How can a person create another way to Heaven by performing good works or deeds? If there is no salvation but through Jesus alone (Acts 4:12), then how do you expect to secure your salvation through good works?
- On the cross Christ said, “It is finished” (John 19:30) meaning redemption’s price was paid. Dare we say that Jesus’ death was not enough to satisfy God (1 John 2:2) and insist that we must do something in ADDITION to purchase our redemption? “It is finished” (John 19:30). How can you in good conscience attempt to add your works, which are termed as “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6) to Christ’s finished work on the cross? Isn’t Jesus enough? How can you add something to that which already finished?
- If you MUST live a certain way or DO good things in order to go to Heaven, then why did Christ die on the cross?
- Christ’s death would be worthless if it can’t save us forever. Are you willing to say that “Christ is dead in vain” (Gal. 2:21) by adding your legalism beside grace?
- How can Jesus be the Savior if you don’t allow Him (ALONE) to be your Savior?

- Since it's the Gospel ALONE that saves us (Rom. 1:16; Eph. 1:13) then how can the way we live contribute to our salvation?
- Is the Gospel really "good news" (1 Cor. 15:3-4), if in the end, it can't save and keep you?
- The Bible says we are "**justified freely by his grace**" (Rom. 3:24). Is God's declaration of our legal standing before God in Heaven (justification) by FREE and UNCONDITIONAL GRACE (Rom. 5:18) a true or false statement from God?
- Are you willing to "frustrate the grace of God" (Gal. 2:21) or violate the message of free grace by adding your works to Christ's sacrifice?
- Jesus saves us to the "uttermost" (completely and forever) because He is our great High Priest (Heb. 7:25). Who are you to say (Rom. 8:34) that Christ's intercession in Heaven is not enough to give you eternal acceptance before God?
- How can you lose something that is eternal (John 3:15-16, 5:24; 6:47)?
- Are you more powerful than God (1 Pet. 1:5; John 10:27-28)?
- A gift is free. How can you earn the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23)? How can salvation be a **free** gift (Eph. 2:8) if you must do something to merit or maintain it? How can God "**freely** give us all things" (Rom. 8:32) related to our salvation and eternal destiny when we must do something to maintain or restore this salvation before God? How can we be "justified **freely**" (Rom. 3:24) or "take the water of life **freely**" (Rev. 22:17) if we must perform certain works to keep it, or live a certain way to maintain it the rest of our lives?
- Is God a liar when He promises to give us salvation and eternal life without conditions (Luke 7:42; Isa. 55:1; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:24; Rev. 22:17)?

- The analogy between physical and spiritual birth is clear (John 3:3-7). First, both physical and spiritual birth maintain a child's status and family relationship. Once a son, always a son! What's true in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm. How can you be unborn? How can you reverse the new birth? Second, the number of a physical and spiritual birth are the same. How many times is a person born physically? Only once. The same is true regarding a person's new birth. He is "born again" as Jesus said, only once! Jesus did not say a person is "born again, and again, and again."
- All of our sins (past, present, and future) were forgiven at the cross (Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:14) and this provides us with the assurance of our eternal acceptance before God. Do you have the audacity to conclude that only your past sins were forgiven by Christ but none of the sins you would commit after you were saved?
- God is satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ (1 John 2:2). Why can't you be satisfied with His sacrifice and trust in Christ to save you completely and forever (Heb. 7:25)?
- The Bible says God accepts you and is no longer angry with you (Rom. 8:38-39), why can't you embrace this comforting truth and be reassured of your salvation and security?
- Christ has "made us free" (Gal. 5:1) from legalism (seeking to earn or merit salvation through law). Why would you want to "entangle yourself again with the yoke of bondage" and live in constant fear and doubt that you are not good enough to go to Heaven?
- Why not rest in Christ alone (Heb. 4:9; Matt. 11:28) and know that the Father accepts you forever, UNCONDITIONALLY through His Son's sacrifice, because of the spiritual blessings that flow from this sacrifice (eternal redemption, righteousness, justification)? This means the heavenly Father accepts you through Christ and what He has done for you.

- Why don't you find security in the wonderful truth that God is your heavenly Father? You are God's Son (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2; Rom. 8:15). A son is always biologically connected to his father. In a similar way, the believer possesses a spiritual relationship with God forever as His son. Galatians 4:6 declares, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba (daddy), Father." As your heavenly Father, God loves you unconditionally, He accepts you as His Son forever through Jesus Christ (what He has done for you). This means that you can live free from the fear of condemnation, hell, rejection, and abandonment. God promises, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5).

Remember: You cannot *try* and *trust* in Jesus at the same time!

There can be NO assurance when you look to yourself for salvation.

You must look ONLY to Christ and His promise of eternal life.

Jesus taught in John 3:14-16: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (so everyone could look at the serpent on the pole), even so must the Son of man be lifted up (on the cross): That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 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."

Isaiah 45:22 declares: "**Look unto me and be ye saved.**" Charles Spurgeon was saved through the declaration of this truth found in Isaiah 45:22. The story of Spurgeon's conversion is widely known, but it should be repeated and it cannot be better told than in the words in which he himself presented it.

"I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair until now, had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm one Sunday morning, while I was going to a certain place of worship. I turned down a side street, and came to a little Primitive Methodist Church. In that chapel there may have been a dozen or fifteen people. I had heard of the Primitive Methodists, how they sang so loudly that they made people's heads ache; but that did not matter to me. I wanted to know how I might be saved....

"The minister did not come that morning; he was snowed up, I suppose. At last a very thin-looking man, a shoemaker, or tailor, or something of that sort,

went up into the pulpit to preach. Now it is well that preachers be instructed, but this man was really stupid. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had little else to say. The text was —‘LOOK UNTO ME, AND BE YE SAVED, ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH’ (Isa. 45:22)

“He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimmer of hope for me in that text. The preacher began thus: ‘This is a very simple text indeed. It says ‘Look.’ Now lookin’ don’t take a deal of pain. It aint liftin’ your foot or your finger; it is just ‘Look.’ Well, a man needn’t go to College to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man needn’t be worth a thousand a year to look. Anyone can look; even a child can look.

"But then the text says, ‘Look unto Me.’ Ay!" he said in broad Essex, ‘many on ye are lookin’ to yourselves, but it’s no use lookin’ there. You’ll never find any comfort in yourselves. Some say look to God the Father. No, look to Him by-and-by. Jesus Christ says, ‘Look unto Me.’ Some on ye say ‘We must wait for the Spirit’s workin.’ You have no business with that just now. Look to Christ. The text says, ‘Look unto Me.’

“Then the good man followed up his text in this way: ‘Look unto Me; I am sweatin’ great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hangin’ on the cross. Look unto Me, I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend to Heaven. Look unto Me; I am sitting at the Father’s right hand. O poor sinner, look unto Me! look unto Me!’

“When he had . . . managed to spin out about ten minutes or so, he was at the end of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger.

“Just fixing his eyes on me, as if he knew all my heart, he said, ‘Young man, you look very miserable.’ Well, I did, but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made from the pulpit on my personal appearance before. However, it was a good blow, struck right home. He continued, ‘And you will always be miserable—miserable in life and miserable in death—if you don’t obey my text; but if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.’ Then lifting up his hands, he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist could do, ‘Young man, look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but look and live!’

“I saw at once the way of salvation. I know not what else he said—I did not take much notice of it—I was so possessed with that one thought . . . I had been waiting to do fifty things, but when I heard that word, "Look!" what a

charming word it seemed to me. Oh! I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away!

“There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that instant, and sung with the most enthusiastic of them, of the precious blood of Christ, and the simple faith which looks alone to Him. Oh, that somebody had told me this before, "Trust Christ, and you shall be saved." Yet it was, no doubt, all wisely ordered, and now I can say:

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

Salvation is by GRACE alone, through FAITH alone, in CHRIST alone!

We have a tendency as humans to believe that nothing in life is free. So the vast majority of mankind believes they must work for their salvation. Even some Christians can't get past this error. They still can't go all the way to a completely free salvation. So what do they do? They teach a halfway doctrine that says we are saved by grace but must keep our salvation by works or by continuing in faith. These are, for the most part, real believers who like the Galatians were saved without any thought of losing their salvation (Gal. 1:4). Like the Galatians, many today, after their salvation experience, develop this erroneous doctrine under the influence of others (Gal. 1:6; 3:1-3). However, they are going to find someday when they go to Heaven that no one is going to be able to claim any merit before or after their salvation. We will only be able to fall on our knees before the God of grace and glory and say, "You, Lord, have done it all!" "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (Rev. 5:12). We must remember that Christ's faithfulness to Christians is not contingent on their faithfulness to Him ("God is faithful" - 1 Cor. 1:9). "Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9).

Some denominations and individuals teach that salvation can be lost, either from sinning or because a person stops believing. There are several reasons for this. First, they are misinterpreting Scripture. Second, many people think Christians can lose their salvation because they have known someone who professed faith in Christ, participated in church activities, perhaps even

seemed to be used of God, and then dropped it all and walked away. To them, this person lost their salvation. Of course, this is an argument from experience, and experience is not a reliable teacher. God's Word is the final authority. Third, some use the logical argument that if salvation is secure then we can live anyway we want. We will deal with all of these arguments and can come to Scripture knowing that the Bible never contradicts itself.

BIBLE CONTRADICTION? Does the Bible contradict itself? Of course, the answer to this question is rather obvious, the Bible never contradicts itself. The contradiction is with man – not with God's Word. Salvation and justification is repeatedly said to be by God's free expression of grace toward sinners (Rom. 3:24, 5:15, 6:23; Rom. 8:32-34; Eph. 2:8-9), which is opposed to law or legalism (Rom. 4:6; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9) and based upon the death of Jesus Christ alone (1 Pet. 3:18; Heb. 7:25), through faith alone (Gal. 3:26; Eph. 2:8-9). *Salvation from start to finish is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.*

Since these are clearly revealed Bible facts, no other verses could overturn these blessed Gospel and saving truths. In fact, any Bible verse that is *misinterpreted* and *misconstrued* to teach that the believer's salvation can be lost and maintained by good works (legalism) would be an insult to God and His grace (Gal. 2:21 – "Christ is dead in vain"). In other words, Christ died without any purpose, if He cannot save us in the way He intended to save us – freely, fully, finally, and forever! We insult God and disgrace His Son when we doubt that His sacrifice is not enough to give us an eternal standing of justification before God and eternal salvation from hell.

The need to be saved, which includes securing our final salvation through "good works" (good deeds and righteous living), would conclude that Christ's payment for sin was not enough to save us, that Jesus' words on the cross ("It is finished" - John 19:30) were a lie (our redemption was not complete), that Jesus needs the cooperation or help of people to secure their salvation and eternal destiny, that we are not saved by grace alone, that we can somehow forfeit eternal life and never be sure of Heaven, since we must look to our performance instead of Christ alone, to save us in the end. Of course, this is unscriptural and absurd. God does not need the help of sinners to secure their salvation before the throne room of God. Remember that we are sinners saved by grace – not works (Titus 3:5).

“Naught have I gotten but what I received;
Grace hath bestowed it since I have believed;
Boasting excluded, pride I abase;
I’m only a sinner, saved by grace!”

Scripture Twisting: In order to teach that salvation is not eternal many people will use various texts from the Bible to disprove the very clear promises and statements of the Bible regarding salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. This is called Scripture twisting or making certain Bible verses teach and convey something which they are not. Many will overturn the clear and unconditional statements in the Bible concerning free salvation and eternal life through God’s grace (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 6:23) by countering them with other verses that they allegedly claim teach conditional salvation. They do this in error. In fact, when seeking to destroy God’s free promises of eternal life they annul God’s unconditional promises and create contradictions in the Bible, paradoxes between grace and works, and a misunderstanding between salvation and sanctification.

In trying to discredit God’s promises of eternal security for the believer many will overlook the *unconditional* promises of eternal life and exchange them for what they believe are *conditional* ones in order to disprove the free gift of salvation by grace which is opposed to law or legalism (Eph. 2:8-9). Those who seek for conditional salvation mix grace with law and overturn the Biblical teaching of free grace (Rom. 11:6). Legalistic restrictions are added to annul the unconditional promises of salvation and eternal life based solely on grace (God’s unmerited favor). In doing this the interpreter commits "exegetical fraud" and turns the Bible into an inconsistent book that contradicts itself and turns God’s *promises* into God’s *possibilities*. Wrongly dividing the truth (2 Tim. 2:15), corrupting or huckstering the Word of God (2 Cor. 2:17), handling the Bible deceitfully (2 Cor. 4:2), and Scripture twisting is nothing new (2 Pet. 3:16). One article that I observed was titled: “200 Reasons Why You Should Not Believe in Eternal Security.”

There are many verses that people use to argue against eternal security but the arguments that are erected are “straw man” arguments which fall down when they are viewed through the grid of God’s free promise of eternal life (Rom. 6:23), which comes to a person by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The verses that are used to do away with God’s promise of free justification before God (Rom. 3:24) and place believers under law

instead of grace (Rom. 6:14-15) are taken out of their context and made to portray something that they are not teaching.

Explanations for Statements that Seemingly Contradict Eternal Security (In three categories): The verses that are used to contradict eternal security fall into one of three categories. First, they are teaching the general character or overall lifestyle of UNSAVED people and prove that a person was NEVER SAVED in the first place (1 John 3:8, 10; Heb. 10:38-39; John 17:12). This would include people with a spurious or counterfeit faith (John 2:23-25; Rom. 8:30-33) and false teachers who move back to their old doctrine and manner of living (2 Peter 2:1-22; 1 Tim. 4:1-2).

Second, the verses are explaining the general character of SAVED people, who live for God and bear spiritual fruit in their lives (John 10:27; 1 John 3:9; 5:18; Eph. 2:10; Rom. 6:22; 8:1; Heb. 12:14). Third, in the epistle of Hebrews some verses and Bible passages (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31) are portraying a HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION that could never occur (a person actually losing his salvation) to prove that it would be impossible to be resaved, since Christ's sacrifice is offered only once and is sufficient to save a person eternally. In other words, if a person could be lost after he is saved, then this actually *discredits and cancels out the original and only sacrifice of Christ* which was given to take away sins forever and provide us with eternal redemption.

All Bible verses which appear to be teaching a "conditional" or "works" salvation can be understood in these three different ways. We can actually place them in three different categories and provide satisfactory explanations for their occurrence in Scripture. This is one way to simplify what these verses are conveying but also unifies what the Bible is teaching. The Bible cannot contradict itself. Since God promises salvation by grace alone (without law or legalism), since it presents salvation as a free gift, and declares our eternal justification through Christ's death alone, then any verse or passage in Scripture that seemingly overturns these promises must be teaching something else. God's Word is not filled with endless contradictions. Therefore, when considering and defending the whole counsel of God's truth (Acts 20:27; 2 Peter. 1:20), three explanations can be given for the Bible texts and verses which are used to discredit eternal security.

Some general observations may be helpful when combining all the verses together that seemingly contradict salvation by grace alone. Since they cannot be teaching that salvation is by works or legalism (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) they are teaching some basic truths.

- ❖ They are not teaching the WAY of salvation but the CONFIRMATION of a person’s salvation through works.
- ❖ They are not teaching the CONDITION for salvation but the CHARACTER of those who are already saved by grace.
- ❖ They are teaching that a person’s salvation is BY GRACE but is confirmed BY WORKS.
- ❖ They are teaching a CONTRAST between the saved and the lost – not a CONDITIONAL path of works that leads to Heaven.
- ❖ They are teaching the PROOF that a person was never saved – not the PERFORMANCE needed to earn salvation.
- ❖ They are teaching the MANNERISMS or general characteristics of saved people – not the MERITORIOUS works and MAINTAINING of a person’s salvation.

Let’s break all of this down in an understandable format.

<p>Three Explanations of Texts that are Used to Discredit Eternal Security ...</p>	<p>There are three Explanations of Texts that are Used to Discredit Eternal Security</p>
<p>Give proof that people ARE saved (not the way of their salvation)</p>	<p>I. They give PROOF that people are saved – they do not explain the way of their salvation.</p>
<p>Give proof that people NEVER were saved (not that they lost their salvation)</p>	
<p>Give proof that people CANNOT lose their salvation (since Christ died only once to save them).</p>	

➤ **The “If” statements**

These passages are often used to demonstrate that salvation is conditional upon continued faith, obedience to God’s truth, and good works. However, this cannot be since justification and salvation are freely given to us based upon God’s grace (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8-9). Therefore, the meaning of these statements is giving the PROOF of a person’s salvation – not the WAY of their salvation. In other words, “If you do these things” then it will give proof of your salvation and confirm that you are one of God’s children.

The **way of salvation** is **by grace** (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8-9) but the **confirmation of salvation** is **by works** (James 2:18-19).

The **way of salvation** is **by grace** (Rom. 3:24; Eph. 2:8-9) but the **confirmation of a person's salvation** is **by works** (Eph. 2:10; James 2:17-18). Any verse that seemingly contradicts salvation by grace alone must be understood in this manner (confirming a person's salvation – not earning salvation), since the Bible does not contradict itself.

Colossians 1:23 – “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel”

This is not the “if of conditional salvation (earning one's salvation through good works) but the “if” that is related to the conformation of one's salvation (Christians do this because they are already saved). When a person continues to remain grounded in the basic and fundamental teachings of “the faith” (what all Christians believe and embrace) and does not abandon the message and hope of the Gospel message, this gives evidence of one's salvation. It confirms their salvation and gives proof that they are born again.

This is not a conditional clause that is based on their future actions. In other words, these saints do not do something right in order to keep their salvation. The “if” that Paul uses here is the “if” of argument. If a person claims to be a Christian, they will believe the fundamental things that all Christians believe. This text does not mean that something *shall be* (they will keep their salvation) if something else is true (they continue to do what is right); rather it means that something *was* true (they were saved) if something else is true (they continue to do what is right).

Hebrews 3:6 – “But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Hebrews 3:14 – “For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”

The “If” Statements

They give **PROOF** of one's salvation but are not the **WAY** of salvation.

This is not the “if” of **CONDITIONAL SALVATION** (doing something to be saved) but the “if” of **CONFIRMATION** (proving one's salvation).

Once again, this is not the “if of conditional salvation (doing something to be saved) but the “if” of conformation (proving one’s salvation). The verse is speaking of the PROOF of one’s salvation – not the WAY of salvation. At first this might seem to imply that our salvation is dependent on our holding fast. If this were true, salvation would be by our endurance rather than by Christ’s finished work on the cross. The true meaning is that we prove we are God’s house if we hold fast. Endurance is a proof of reality. In this case, those people who lose confidence in Christ’s finished work on the cross and in His promises and permanently return to rituals and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law show that they were never born again. This is a warning against apostasy. The point is this; believers don’t apostatize – unbelievers do!

Those who were never saved are those who totally abandon the truth about Christ’s finished work and forsake Christ’s work on the cross. Once again, these verses do not teach the CONDITION of salvation but the PROOF of one’s salvation. In other words, since all true believers do continue to manifest certain signs of regenerating life and embrace the basic teachings of the Bible about Christ, they give proof and the confirmation of their salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:2 – “By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”

The Bible clearly teaches that we are saved by the Gospel (“By which also ye are saved”). We are not saved by our works but by Christ’s finished work. The good news is Christ saves us!

Paul adds the words – “if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.” In this chapter Paul is highlighting the importance of the resurrection. He is saying that “if” a person remembers about the importance of the resurrection and continues to embrace this message, then it gives PROOF of their salvation. It demonstrates they have embraced the Gospel message by faith and are saved. However, “if” a person does not remember and embrace what he was taught regarding Christ’s resurrection, the integral part of the Gospel message and our hope of eternal life (1 Cor. 15:4), then they give evidence and proof that they are not true believers and that they have “believed in vain.”

In other words, any person who claims to have believed on Christ but rejects the fundamental truth of His bodily resurrection is not a true believer and their faith is in vain (1 Cor. 15:14, 17). It is empty, worthless, and invalid. Paul is

simply stating that if a person does not place faith in Christ's bodily resurrection, then they weren't saved at all. Instead, they were attacking the whole truth of the Gospel. To Paul, the resurrection was fundamental. Without it there was no salvation and Christianity. In this case, continuing to believe in the resurrection is PROOF of one's salvation. Once again, the context is not talking about the "if of conditional salvation (do this and you will keep yourself saved) but the "if" that reflects the confirmation of one's salvation (do this and you will prove that you are saved). Although a person must believe on Christ's death and resurrection for salvation (1 Cor. 15:3-4), this verse is not talking about keeping oneself saved, vacillating back and forth from salvation, but confirming one's own salvation by their constant faith in Christ.

2 Peter 1:10 – "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

Here is another "if" statement in the Bible. As in very case, this is not the "if" of conditional salvation (earning your salvation) but the "if" that is related to the confirmation of one's salvation. A person can make their sovereign calling and election "sure" (more sure or possess confidence about it) "if" they "do these things." What things is Peter talking about? They are the "things" of verse eight which are looking back to the character traits and spiritual graces of Christians living. Here the "if" has to do with keeping ourselves from falling into a life of spiritual unfruitfulness, or falling into a barren Christian life (vs. 8-9), where we are not living a productive spiritually life. This is not falling into an unsaved state and losing our salvation but falling into a state where we lack spiritual productivity. It has nothing to do with losing our salvation but losing our fruitful productivity in the Christian life.

Christians can lapse in to times when they are bearing little fruit in relation to their Christian lives (1 Cor. 3:3) and they can become "blind" to the most important and spiritual things of life (2 Pet. 1:9), forgetting that God has "purged" (cleansed) them from their old ways of living. Of course, even carnal Christian will bear a certain amount of fruit but his life is characterized by more defeats than victories. *This person simply has not developed as far as other Christians in the area of sanctification. Their growth is stunted and they are not progressing in sanctification as other Christians.* Every Christian does bear fruit in varying amounts within their Christian lives (Matt. 13:23). However, by manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, through witnessing transformation in our personal lives, we can provide unmistakable evidence

that we truly belong to Him. A holy life PROVES the reality of our salvation – it does not become the WAY of our salvation.

Peter is determined to keep on reminding the believers of the importance of the development of Christian character. Living a holy life will keep us from stumbling, or as the text says, so we might “never fall” in to a time of spiritual decline and unproductiveness. This is not a question of falling into eternal perdition; the work of Christ delivers us from this (John 3:16). Rather, this is referring to falling into sin, disgrace, or disuse. If we fail to progress in divine things, we are in danger of wrecking our Christian lives from a spiritual perspective and missing out on God’s best for our lives.

2 Peter 1:11 goes on to say: “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Not only is there safety from spiritual failure by our constant spiritual progress, there is also the promise of a richly-provided entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Peter is not talking about the *fact* of our entry but to the *manner* of it. The only basis of admission to the earthly kingdom or theocracy is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the new birth (John 3:5). However, some believers will have a more abundant entrance than others. This means there will be degrees of reward and reigning privileges and the rewards are here said to depend on the degree of one’s conformity to the Savior or manifesting Christlike Christian virtues in their lives (vv. 5-8).

2 Timothy 2:11-13 – “*It is a faithful saying: For if we (the elect – vs. 10) be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*”

These first “if” statement (“if we be dead with *him*, we shall also live with *him*”) speaks of our POSITIONAL salvation through our spiritual identification with Christ in His death and resurrection life, whereby we are born again and possess God’s saving life (Rom. 6; Col. 3:3). The only way we can be dead and alive with Christ is through our spiritual identification with Him which is something that occurs at the new birth. This first “if” actually provides us with the assurance of our salvation since our death and resurrection life (new birth) is completely the work of God (John 1:13).

The second “if” statement (“If we suffer, we shall also reign with *him*”) is PRACTICAL to the Christian life and is addressing our suffering and reigning with Christ. Christ endured great suffering and will one day reign on earth (1 Cor. 15:25) and those saints who endure suffering for Him will one day reign with Him in a greater and more significant manner (Rev. 3:21) than other saints (Rev. 5:10). This “if” statement focuses on our privilege to reign with Christ – not our legalistic efforts to secure our salvation.

The third “if” statement (“if we deny *him*, he also will deny us”) speaks of the PATTERN of apostasy. It refers to ultimately disowning Christ (1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 10:38–39; 2 John 9), and the Lord’s ultimate rejection of those who merely professed Christ temporarily but had no saving relationship with Him (Matt. 10:33). Instead of identifying with Christ, the apostate finally and forever dissociates himself with Christ and truth (vv. 18, 20-21).

To “deny him” here does not point merely to a temporary weakness of faith, as in the case of Peter (Luke 22:54–62), but as the conclusion shows, means to deny our relation with Him as a permanent fact. It is a permanent, habitual denial of Christ and one that disowns Him forever. It is this person that will someday be denied by Christ no matter how pious and high sounding their profession might be when the Kingdom is established over the earth (Matt. 7:21-23). Therefore, some will reign with Christ (believers) while others (unbelievers) will be denied entrance into the messianic kingdom.

Apostasy once again gives PROOF that a person was never saved. Apostasy can only be committed by unbelievers – not believers. Apostasy is the EVIDENCE and CONFIRMATION that a person was NEVER saved. The apostate is not a person that loses something he already possessed, such as salvation and the truth; he is a person that demonstrates he never possessed salvation and the truth. The apostate has nothing to lose, since he never had anything that was gained, or anything that was genuine or real.

The fourth “if” statement (“If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself”) is looking back to the act of apostasy. It is a confirmation of the third statement. To “believe not” means to give up one’s faith and the present tense denotes this as the habitual attitude and act, not a temporary lapse. It is a permanent choice. In this case, God must remain “faithful” which means that God cannot be inconsistent with Himself. God is faithful to His own word and character and therefore must judge apostates (2 Peter 2:3). God is faithful to His promises which He gives to believers (John 6:47) but

He is also faithful to His threatenings which He gives to apostates (2 Pet. 2:17) and they will certainly be denied entrance into the Millennium or Kingdom (Matt. 7:21-23).

John 8:31

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed.”

This “if statement was said in the context of distinguishing between the true and false disciples (followers of Christ). There were some who “believed on him” (John 8:30) but to prove the genuine nature of their faith and salvation these same people would continue to manifest a desire to follow the teachings of Christ (John 8:31 – “if you continue in my word”). This is not referring to the “if of earning one’s salvation through discipleship but the “if” of the confirmation of one’s salvation. If you are true child of God, you won’t abandon Christ and His teachings and never want anything else to do with Him and His ways.

The fact that some of the people believed on Christ in this instance is teaching that some paid attention to Jesus’ words and believed these words without necessarily committing themselves to Christ personally as Savior (see John 2:23-24). People can place a superficial belief in Christ that is not genuine and this is eventually manifested by their departure from Christ and His Word. It was possible for the Jews to “believe” in the message of repentance and the coming kingdom (John 8:30) without actually being born again. How can this be? It’s because they were not willing to commit their faith and souls to Christ and allow Him to become their Savior.

The point of Jesus is this. Those who are true believers have this characteristic - they continue to abide in His Word (John 8:31). This means that they continue following the teachings of Christ and persevere in the basic doctrine of Christ. They do not turn aside from Christ and abandon Him, His Word, and His way forever. In other words, true faith always has *the quality of permanence*. These saints are not saved by abiding in His Word, but they abide in His Word because they are saved.

1 John 2:24

“Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.”

This “if” statement is given in the context of apostasy which is when someone denies the deity of Jesus Christ (1 John 2:22). If one denies that Jesus Christ is God then they deny that the Father is God for both share the same existence together as God. You are against Christ (an “antichrist”) if you deny His deity (1 John 2:23) and you are also do not have the Father’s life within you (1 John 2:24). It’s in this context of apostasy that the “if” statement appears (1 John 2:24).

“Let that (referring to the truth about Christ’s deity) therefore abide (remain) in you, which ye have heard from the beginning (referring to the teachings of Christ and the apostles). If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain (abide) in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.” In other words, if we continue to embrace the truth that Jesus is God and accept the fact of His deity, then it gives proof or evidence that we are saved. This is not the “if” related to earning or meriting our salvation but the “if” of proving our salvation. Continuing in sound doctrine regarding Christ’s person and work is certainly the proof of one’s salvation but it’s not the way of salvation. John is talking about what comes after salvation (perseverance in truth about Jesus Christ) that gives evidence that one’s salvation experience was true and genuine.

John 15:2

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

In John 15:6 Jesus explains this in more detail:

“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned.”

This “if” statement is often used to teach conditional salvation based upon one’s obedience and good works. Once again, those who teach this misunderstand what Jesus was talking about in this chapter. He was referring to false profession or those (like Judas – John 6:70) that are apostate and which never embraced Him as Savior. Someone who is called a “devil” (acting like the devil himself) is not a child of God. Jesus taught that people who claim to have a relationship with him (“Every branch in me” – John 15:2), but who does not bear any true or lasting fruit in their life, cannot be saved. Furthermore, if this same person does not “abide” in Christ (“if a

man abide not in me” – John 15:4), or continue to manifest a relationship with Christ, this also proves that they are not one of His own children. As a result, they will someday face the judgment of God in hell. John 15:6 is not the “if” of earning and meriting one’s salvation but the “if” of apostasy which proves that one was never saved. If a person does not persevere in their relationship with Christ and abandons Him forever, like Judas, then they give proof that they were never saved. Remember that an apostate was never saved (Matt. 7:23 – “I never knew you”) and therefore they cannot lose their salvation.

John 17:12 speaks of Judas Iscariot:

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

Let’s draw some Biblical conclusions from John 17:12.

PROMISE: “I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost.” All people that are given (“them that thou gavest me”) are elected and kept safe and secure by Christ’s mighty power! This is a wonderful promise. The elect are those who embrace Christ by faith and become part of His elect community or body that He is forming today. All those who are truly saved can never be lost because of the power of Jesus Christ in keeping them safe and secure.

CONTRAST: “none of them is lost, but the son of perdition” – Of course, Judas was not lost from a salvation perspective but from the perspective of being a discipleship. Not all of Christ’s disciples were genuine (John 6:66; 2:23-25; 1 John 2:19). This is actually a statement of fact. Jesus said that all the other disciples are saved but Judas is lost. It does not mean he was saved and lost. Jesus never said this. He simply said that Judas was lost. This means all people that are not given to Christ or elected by the Father. As a result, they cannot be kept secure by Christ’s power and are therefore lost, since they were NEVER one of God’s elect. In other words, they never were saved since they did not become part of God’s elect body. Judas was not saved and lost but he was lost because he was never saved. Jesus was making a simple declaration – Judas was lost. This implication is NOT that he was once saved and lost but that he was the only one that was never

saved and therefore he was lost. He was a tare among the wheat (Matt. 13:25).

The emphasis of this verse is on the Father's election and Christ's power to keep His own – not on the loss of salvation because a person lacks some kind of legalistic works. Christ's own words of security ("I have kept" and "none of them is lost") prove that Judas was not saved and then lost, since Christ never loses those who are His own children. Again, Jesus did not say that Judas was saved and then lost; He states that Judas was lost because he was never given to Christ! There is a difference. Christ does not lose people from the standpoint of an eternal, elective relationship with Him. Christ does not lose people who are saved. He states that people are "lost" because they are not saved and because they possess a counterfeit and illegitimate relationship with Him (Heb. 12:6-8). Judas was the black sheep among the disciples. Judas never had adoption papers!

Judas was NEVER saved for several reasons:

- ✓ He was never given to Christ like the rest of the disciples. He was not part of God's elect company of people which keeps a person safe and secure (John 17:12).
- ✓ He was lost while the other disciples were saved according to the clear teaching of Christ (John 17:12).
- ✓ He was a son of perdition – not a son of God (John 17:12).
- ✓ He was overtaken by Satan himself (John 6:70; 13:2, 27).
- ✓ He was prophesied to betray Christ which proves he was never one of His own (Ps. 41:9).
- ✓ He never was cleansed and forgiven of all his sins like the other disciples (John 13:11).
- ✓ He was a dead branch which could not bear true fruit and prove he possessed regenerating life (John 15:2, 6).
- ✓ He was never a genuine disciple because of his departure (John 6:66; 1 John 2:19).

John 15:10 gives another "if" statement:

"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."

This "if" statement relates to how the believer experiences Christ's love in their lives or expresses their loving relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

They obey Him (John 14:14; 15:10; 1 John 5:2-3). The two (loving Christ and obedience) are inseparably bound together. This “if” statement is not referring to experiencing salvation but experiencing one’s love relationship with the Lord. The text does not say “if” you keep God’s commands you will be saved but “if” you follow His commands you will “abide” in God’s love (experience a loving relationship with Christ). Like all other “if” statements, this points to the proof and confirmation of one’s salvation.

1 John 2:3

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Once again, this is not referring to the “if” of earning or meriting our salvation but the “if” of confirmation (“we do know that we know him”) when we obey Christ’s commandments, which is the characteristic of all Christians. All believers in some measure and to some degree obey Christ and follow His commands and by so doing they can know that that they have a saving relationship with God. Their obedience is a secondary confirmation of their salvation – the primary assurance being that of God’s promise (1 John 5:10-12; John 3:16).

➤ **Obedient statements**

Obedient Statements

Obedience is **not** the **CONDITION** of salvation but the **CHARACTER** and **CONFIRMATION** of a person’s salvation.

Hebrews 5:9

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

The obedient statements which are often used to teach conditional salvation (earning or meriting one’s salvation through good works) are once again referring to the proof of one’s salvation – not the way of salvation. In other words, obedience is not a requirement for salvation and eternal life but the evidence of salvation and that one possesses eternal life through faith alone (John 6:47). A person does not obey to be saved; they obey because they are saved.

Romans 8:1 is another example:

“*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (our position), who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (our practice).

The believer's position in Christ is secure and therefore they should never fear God's condemnation (Rom. 8:38-39). Please note that the practice flows out of the position (one's salvation) – the practice does not create the position (one's salvation).

This means that our secure position before the throne of God is not conditioned upon one's obedience; however, one's obedience ("who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit") gives proof or evidence that one is saved and secure in Christ's unchanging work and the Father's love. In other words, our unchanging position of acceptance before the throne will be evidenced by the condition of our living on earth. This is speaking of the *character* of Christians – not the *condition* of their salvation.

The same phrase is used in Romans 8:4 when referring to the believer's victory over the flesh or sin nature ("who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"). Christians possess victory by living after the power of the Spirit and not by legalism (following the Mosaic Law in their own strength and power).

Romans 8:13

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die (experience spiritual death): but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (experience a new way of spiritual life).

Similar to Romans 8:1, Paul is telling the true story of those who are saved. In this instance, he is contrasting the dominant lifestyle of the unsaved person with the dominant or characteristic lifestyle of the saved individual. He does this to make an important and valid point. He begins with the unsaved: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die" which refers to experiencing spiritual death in this context and elsewhere in Romans (Rom. 8:2; 6:23; 5:12). Next, Paul deals with the saved person: "but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

When we put to death the sinful deeds that are energized by the flesh by applying our victory, through the power and presence of the Spirit of God operating in our life, it's then we will truly possess a born-again behavioral pattern. The words "ye shall live" (experience new life in the realm of the Spirit – manifesting a new behavioral pattern) and suggests that all true Christians live according to God's basic standard of transformation which is evidenced in all genuine believers. In other words, all Christians bear some

fruit, they will manifest a change of life in some measure, and as a result, others will know that the Spirit of God resides in them.

Paul is not talking about earning or meriting our salvation by our obedience and victory in the Christian life but is informing us on the character and basic standard of living and conduct that all Christians manifest.

He says that when you experience the Spirit's victory "ye shall live" in the manner that all Christians experience and maintain. In other words, every Christian, in some measure, shall live by manifesting the Spirit's work and victory taking place in their life and others will know that they are a Christian by their transformation of living. Again, this is not the way of salvation but the confirmation of a person's salvation.

Acts 5:32

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so *is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

This verse is once again teaching the basic truth that those who obey Christ prove that they are saved and therefore the Holy Spirit lives within them. The Holy Spirit is NOT given to them on the basis of their obedience (works and legalism) but on the basis of faith (Gal. 3:2-3). In other words, the Holy Spirit lives within people who have transferred their faith to Christ and are saved, which have manifested obedience. The saints don't have the Holy Spirit because they obey, they obey because they have the Holy Spirit. In other words, it can be proven that the Holy Spirit dwells within the lives of those who are obedient and transformed because they are already saved (2 Pet. 3:18).

Some have also used and abused Romans 6:16 and 6:22, among others, to prove that a person must yield themselves to God and obey Him in order to be saved and have eternal life. However, this is not what Paul is teaching. Paul is NOT talking about someone meriting or maintain their salvation, but the fact that all Christians do demonstrate and express personal transformation in their lives, which means they already possess eternal life (John 3:36) and will continue to experience it at the end of their days on earth.

Romans 6:16 says:

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

The contrast between the saved and unsaved is once again evident in this verse. If a person is a servant or slave to sin then they are experiencing a life “of sin unto death.” In other words, they are manifesting an unsaved lifestyle that will end with spiritual separation from God in hell (Rom. 6:23). On the other hand, a person that is practicing righteousness, as an overall pattern or way of life, verifies that he is living a life “of obedience unto righteousness” (righteous living) and therefore manifests he is saved and one of God’s children (1 John 3:8-9; 5:18).

Romans 6:22

“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

This verse is teaching the same thing. Paul begins by teaching something all Christians experience at the time of their salvation (“being made free from sin, and become servants to God” – Rom. 6:6) and also during their Christian life (“ye have your fruit unto holiness” – possessing the sign or mark of regenerating life) which confirms that they already possess eternal life and will enter Heaven at the end of their lives (“the end everlasting life”). This is not a picture of Christians EARNING eternal life at the end of their lives, based upon the number of their good deeds, but the CONFIRMATION that they already possess eternal life and will enjoy it forever after their days have ended on earth. In all of these verses, the Bible teaches the CONFIRMATION of a person’s salvation – not the WAY of salvation.

Revelation 22:14

“Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

This Bible verse reveals that following or doing his commandments can reassure a person that they will enter Heaven someday and have access to the tree of life. Is this verse teaching that we can earn our way into Heaven? Since our inheritance in Heaven is already confirmed and unconditional (Phil. 3:20; 1 Peter 1:4) by God’s promise and grace, this is NOT referring to conditional salvation (entering Heaven on the basis of our good works). What

this is referring to is that only those who give evidence of their salvation, by manifesting a change of life and conduct, will one day enter Heaven. We do not earn or merit our entrance into Heaven based upon our goodness and obedience (John 14:6) but we do give evidence that we are Heaven bound by the transformation of our living. John is once again saying that works are the proof of our salvation – not the way of salvation.

Hebrews 12:14

“Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

This verse is very similar to all the previous verses we have studied. It reveals that a person’s entrance into Heaven and seeing the Lord someday is CONFIRMED by their conduct or transformation of living. Again, it cannot be referring to the CONDITION for salvation but the CHARACTER of those who are saved and enter Heaven someday.

Matthew 24:13

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Many will use this verse to prove that a person must keep doing good deeds up to the end of his life in order to merit his salvation. In other words, if a person wants to be sure of his salvation he must keep doing good works in order to gain entrance into Heaven. However, the context does not fit this interpretation nor does the rest of the Bible support it. The time reference is the Tribulation Period. The word “endure” means to be a survivor of this period of time (physical endurance) and the word “saved” is not referring to spiritual deliverance or salvation from hell but one’s physical deliverance (salvation) through the entire seven-year Tribulation Period. There is no mention at all of earning one’s salvation but physically surviving the terrible coming days of judgment over the earth. This verse has nothing to do with the salvation of one’s soul but the physical deliverance of their body through the future seven-year Tribulation Period.

➤ John’s Statements

John provides us with many statements related to obedience and transformation of living which gives proof and confirmation of a person’s salvation. They might be termed “the signs of salvation.” However, none of John’s statements are presented as the way of salvation, since salvation is

by grace alone (Eph. 2:8-9). In these verses, John speaks of the *characteristics* of all true Christians and the *confirmation* of a person's salvation through their transformation of living.

There are seven confirmation statements related to a believer's salvation.

1. The CONFIRMATION of a person's salvation through their fellowship with God (1 John 1:6-10).

1 John 1:6-10 addresses the heretics claims:

"If we (like the Gnostics) say (talking but not walking) that we have fellowship with him, and walk (characteristically and consistently) in darkness (falsehood and sin), we lie (about our relationship with God), and do not the truth (are consistently and habitually not living according to God's standard of holy and righteousness living): But if we walk in the light (consistently seek to live according to God's holiness and standard), as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another (the believer with God), and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (the blood of Jesus restores and maintains our fellowship when we do confess our sins).

"If we say (like the Gnostics) that we have no sin (denying that we have a sinful nature and live without sin, possessing no guilt over our sin, never admitting that we are a sinner), we deceive ourselves (we are living out a lie regarding the true nature of our life), and the truth is not in us (do not acknowledge the truth about ourselves – what God says about us – that we are a sinner and do sin). If we confess our sins (acknowledging our sins before God as all Christians do), he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

"If we say (like the Gnostics) that we have not sinned (denying the existence of a sin nature and deceiving ourselves about sin in our life), we make him a liar (make God out to be a liar who says that we do sin and need confession and cleansing), and his word is not in us" (the truth of God's Word, what He says about us, is not part of our hearts and we don't give it a proper place in our lives).

John's main point is that a genuine Christian does not habitually walk in darkness but rather walks in the light (2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:12, 13) and in this relationship with God cleansing from sin continually occurs (1

John 1:7, 9). These words are spoken by John while reflecting upon the Gnostic false teachers who made many false claims of their spirituality and walk with God. However, their *talk* does not match their *walk*. What they say does not measure up to what they *do*. A saved person cannot and will not continually “live a lie” in relation to their walk and fellowship with God and never confess his sins (1 John 1:9). When a person does not acknowledge their sins before God, continues to sin, and fails to walk with God, it proves that they are not a genuine believer. Their commitment to a life of sin gives proof that they have never been saved even though they might claim to be in fellowship with God (“if we say”) and love the brethren (1 John 4:20). Saying is one thing; living is another thing!

John repeatedly states in his epistle that the “truth” (what God says about a person’s sinfulness and need for restoration - 1 John 1:6, 8; 2:4; 3:19) and “word” (what the Bible teaches about Christians and confession of sin - 1 John 1:10) is not in the person who makes these repeated false claims of spirituality and sinlessness, which actually confirms they are not saved. When the truth and Word of God are not part of someone’s life, this means they are not responding to what the Bible says and it has no lasting relevance and impact upon their lives, which once again proves that they are not born again (1 Cor. 2:14).

On the other hand, those who do walk with God (“if we doers” of 1 John 1:7), admit when they do sin, and confess their sins (1 John 1:9) prove that they are saved. The habitual practice and lifestyle of the Christian is to walk in God’s holiness, admit their sinfulness before God, and confess their sins. The habitual lifestyle of an unbeliever is to walk in darkness, neglect spiritual living, deny their sinfulness before God, and fail to confess their sins.

This whole chapter and epistle does not teach the message of earning or losing one’s salvation but the dichotomy or distinction between those who were NEVER saved and those who are saved. Lying about one’s spiritual condition, living a life of hypocrisy, is repeatedly mentioned in John’s epistle and becomes the acid test and confirmation that a person is not saved (1 John 1:6, 10; 2:4; 4:20). A person that habitually lies about their relationship with God, fails to obey God, and who does not possess love for the brethren gives plenty of outward evidence that they are not saved.

2. The CONFIRMATION of a person's salvation through their obedience and love for God (1 John 2:3-5; 5:1-2; 3:24).

1 John 2:3-5

“And hereby we do know (possess confidence) that we know him (in a saving and relational way), if we keep his commandments (as a pattern and way of life). He that saith (like the Gnostics), I know him (has a saving relationship with God), and keepeth not his commandments (as a pattern and way of life), is a liar (by claiming to be something he is not and possessing something he does not have), and the truth is not in him (the truth about himself, his sin, and relationship with God). But whoso keepeth his word (the true believer who seeks to obey God), in him verily is the love of God perfected (reaches its goal in a person's life): hereby know we that we are in him” (can have confidence that we possess a saving union and relationship with God through Jesus Christ when we are obedient and manifesting love in our hearts toward God).

1 John 5:1-2

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him (loves God) that begat (brought new birth and life into his spirit) loveth him also (the brethren) that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments” (as an overall pattern of living)

John has previously taught that keeping God's commandments is proof that one loves God (John 14:15, 23; 15:10). The main point is this. Our obedience and love for God proves the validity and genuine nature of our saving relationship with God. We can know that we are “in him” (1 John 2:5), or possess a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ, when our life is characterized by obedience and love for the Lord. Obedience and love for God is the sure sign and road marker that we are saved. If a person's life is only characterized by disobedience and defiance against God and His ways, it demonstrates that this person was NEVER saved.

1 John 3:24 adds:

“And he that keepeth his commandments (as a pattern of living and habitual practice) dwelleth in, and he in him (possesses a saving union between the believer and Christ). And hereby we (that are truly saved and born again)

know that he (God) abideth in us (dwells in our lives), by the Spirit which he hath given us” (by the Holy who is lives within us to transform our life).

John is very clear about his repeated statements regarding obedience. Obedience is not the WAY of salvation but the CONFIRMATION of one’s salvation and new birth.

3. The CONFIRMATION of a person’s salvation through their love for the family of God (1 John 2:9-11; 3:14-15, 20-21; 4:7-8).

1 John 2:9-11

“He that saith (like the Gnostics) he is in the light (walking in holiness), and hateth his brother (as a pattern and mark of one’s life), is in darkness (controlled by sin, unbelief, and blindness – description of an unsaved person) even until now (this man continues to be what he always was, namely, unsaved). He that loveth his brother (in an ongoing and habitual manner) abideth in the light (of God’s holiness), and there is none occasion of stumbling in him (as it relates to himself = hatred becomes an internal stumbling block which can lead to other disastrous spiritual pitfalls – as it relates to others = no person will stumble over any discrepancy between his profession and practice). But he that hateth his brother (as a characteristic mark of one’s life) is in darkness (under the control and dominance of sin in an unsaved, lost estate), and walketh in darkness (sinfulness as a consistent pattern or characteristic way of life), and knoweth not whither he goeth (has no idea of his own waywardness and sin), because that darkness (sin of hatred) hath blinded his eyes.”

1 John 3:14-15

“We know that we have passed from death (spiritual death) unto life (spiritual life), because we love the brethren (as a pattern and characteristic of living). He that loveth not (as a pattern and mark of one’s life) *his* brother abideth in death (the realm of spiritual death). Whosoever hateth his brother (as a characteristic of one’s life) is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”

John is clearly talking about unsaved people hating the brethren, who do not possess eternal life. If a person passionately hates the brethren it gives evidence that this person has never been saved. However, if one shows new love toward the saints it gives the evidence that they have been born again.

The word “darkness” (1 John 2:11) refers to an individual who has never been delivered from the evil nature and blindness of sin (1 John 1:6; Col. 1:13). A person proves that they are also abiding (remaining) in the realm of spiritual death (1 John 3:14-15) if he hates the brethren.

In other words, they were NEVER saved and demonstrate this by their repeated actions of hatred toward the family of God. Hatred and disapproval for God’s family proves that a person does not have eternal life abiding in him (1 John 4:8). However, John repeatedly reaffirms that loving the brethren and reaching out to meet their needs proves that they are one of God’s children (1 John 3:17-18, 4:16). Our love for the brethren testifies of our salvation (1 John 4:7).

1 John 4:16

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him” (possesses a saving relationship with God).

1 John 5:1 once again reads:

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him (God) that begat loveth him also (the believer or saint as a pattern or way of life) that is begotten of him.”

1 John 4:7-8

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God (possesses God’s life and nature), and knoweth God (in a saving and relational way). He that loveth not (as a pattern or way of life) knoweth not God (does not have a saving relationship with God); for God is love.”

These verses clearly teach a dichotomy between the saved and unsaved. There is presented here the characteristic of the saved who are born of God (born again) and know God relationally. The saints who are “beloved” possess a genuine love for other brethren. This fact is set in contrast to another group of people that “loveth not” and “knoweth not God” (an expression for unbelievers who have no relationship with God). This is a clear-cut reference to a person that does not know God in a saving and relational fashion. Only believers can know God in a relational way and possess genuine fellowship with Him (1 John 5:20).

4. The CONFIRMATION of a person's salvation through their hope of eternal life with God (1 John 2:15-17).

Following the context of this chapter and the entire book, John is once again making a contrast between the saved and unsaved. This dichotomy is easily seen.

1 John 2:15

“Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world (as a consistent pattern and way of life – habitually), the love of the Father is not in him” (he lacks God's love and the sign of regenerating life – as in 1 John 2:5).

1 John 2:17

“And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth (habitually and characteristically, as a consistent pattern of life) the will of God (a Christian does practice God's will) abideth for ever.”

John is speaking about His children following God's will (1 John 2:15-16) and experiencing eternal life with God in Heaven. This is the hope that every child of God possesses. John and other writers elsewhere confirm that it is characteristic for Christians to follow God's will (John 10:27-28; Matt. 7:21-22). The true or genuine Christian is contrasted with those who do not obey (1 John 2:3-5), hate the brethren (1 John 2:9-12) and the antichrists (1 John 2:18-19). In a similar way, only the believer who is saved truly loves the Father and follows God's will (1 John 2:15-16) with the end result of abiding forever with God in Heaven (possessing eternal life - 1 John 2:17) by experiencing the wonderful blessings of His companionship, abundant life, and reward throughout eternity (Rev. 21-22).

The texts says, “he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” John is NOT saying we attain (earn or merit) eternal life by our obedience but SINCE all Christians in some measure do practice God's will (Matt. 7:21), they can therefore claim the promise that is given in this verse. Once again, John is contrasting the true (saved) from the false (unsaved) in this chapter and throughout various sections of the book (1 John 2:3, 5, 9-12, 18). This is John's promise. All Christians will not only have an eternal relationship with God that lasts forever (Rev. 21) but we will also possess great reward or spiritual riches that accompany this relationship (Rev. 22:12). Of course, our eternal life and reward will be experienced (Rev. 2:17; 3:12) in proportion to

how each child of God obeys Christ and refuses to imbibe the world's culture (1 John 2:15-16).

1 John 5:20 declares this about our eternal life:

“And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding (about the deity of Christ and the promise of eternal life through Him), that we may know him (in a saving and relational way) that is true, and we are in him (a saving union) that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.”

Once again, every believer can know that he possesses eternal life through Jesus Christ and will one day experience the full blessings of this promise when they are with God in Heaven (1 John 2:17). Our primary assurance of eternal life (abiding forever with God) is rooted in Jesus Christ alone (1 John 5:20) and the secondary confirmation of our assurance is realized in our transformation of living, mainly, following God's will for our life (1 John 2:15-16).

5. The CONFIRMATION of a person's salvation through their perseverance in the truth of God (1 John 2:18-24).

1 John 2:18-24

“Little children, it is the last time (we are living in the last days before Christ's return): and as ye have heard that antichrist (the Antichrist of the Book of Revelation) shall come, even now are there many antichrists (those who are against Christ and His ways); whereby we know that it is the last time (the time prior to Christ's return). They went out from us (leaving true Christian fellowships), but they were not of us (part of the true family of God); for if they had been of us (a true Christian), they would *no doubt* have continued with us (perseverance in the Christians truth and life): but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest (openly revealed as unbelievers and imposters) that they were not all of us (they were tares among the wheat – Matt. 13:25).

“But ye (all genuine Christians) have an unction (special endowment) from the Holy One (Holy Spirit), and ye know all things (not in absolute sense, but a general capacity to know the truth and what is false, the ability to possess discernment and not be led astray into errors about the doctrine of Christ). I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth (they were not ignorant about the truth), but because ye know it (to confirm the truth they already know), and that no lie is of the truth (when a person teaches

something contrary to God's Word it's a lie and the primary lie is denying Christ's deity – that Jesus was God in the flesh).

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? (that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Messiah, the revelation of Jehovah Himself, who came in the flesh to die for sin and rise from the dead). He is antichrist (against Christ), that denieth the Father and the Son (that both the Father and Son share God's existence together). Whosoever denieth the Son (His deity – that He is God – Jehovah Himself), the same hath not the Father (no saving relationship with the Father): *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.* Let that therefore abide in you (the truth that Jesus Christ is the revelation of Jehovah – God's existence), which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you (possess a home in your heart), ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father” (maintain and persevere in the truth that both the Son and Father share God's existence together).

The reason why a person leaves the family of God and rejects the great doctrines of the Bible is because of apostasy. Apostasy or departure from the true family of God and key doctrines of the Bible, such as the deity of Christ or virgin birth and resurrection of Christ, proves that a person is against Christ, that he is an imposter, and one who was NEVER saved. On the other hand, those who continue to remain in fellowship with the family of God and embrace the key doctrines of Scripture (the death, deity, virgin-birth, and Second Coming of Christ) proves that they are saved.

Whenever another spirit (an evil spirit) speaks through someone and denies the deity of Christ, we can be sure that this person is not saved and that “they are of the world” (1 John 4:2-6). The true children of God will not be lead astray into heresies related to the doctrine of Christ, since they “know” the difference between “the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6) and “have overcome them” (1 John 4:4 – the apostates or antichrists who possess demonic messages) because of the life of God within them.

1 John 4:15 declares:

“Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God (declaring His deity – John 5:18), God dwelleth in him, and he in God” (that person possesses a saving union and relationship with God).

1 John 5:1

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ (that the Jesus of the New Testament is the Messiah, the revelation of Jehovah Himself, who came in the flesh to die for sin and rise from the dead) is born of God”

Continuing to embrace the truth that Jesus Christ is God’s Son, the Messiah, that Jesus Christ was God and entered the world in a fleshly body, proves the genuineness of a person’s salvation and regeneration. Remaining loyal to key doctrines regarding Christ’s person and work is the telltale sign or indication of one’s regeneration. All true Christians do persevere in key doctrines regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:6, 14). Christians are not perfect but they are Christological.

6. The CONFIRMATION of a person’s salvation through their new birth and life from God (1 John 2:29; 3:7-10; 5:18-19).

1 John 2:29

“If ye know that he is righteous (God the Father or God the Son), ye know that every one (this is true of all believers without exception!) that doeth righteousness (literally, “the one doing the righteousness” – present active participle denotes habit of life - the prevailing principle of one’s life – not a single action, but a succession of acts which make up the life) is born of him” (possesses God’s life and nature and righteous living becomes the visible sign of regeneration).

Of course, a lifestyle of righteousness does not produce the new birth but is the visible evidence and outward confirmation that the individual “is born of Him.” This is John’s main point throughout the entire epistle.

1 John 3:9

“Whosoever is born of God (possesses God’s life and nature) doth not commit sin (literally, “every one having been born of God sin not is doing” – as a pattern or habitual practice or way of life as the present-tense verb indicates); for his seed (God’s life and nature) remaineth in him: and he cannot sin (literally – “not he is able to go on sinning” – a life in which sin is not the permanent state), because he is born of God.”

The genuine believer possesses God’s “seed” (the new life and nature of God) and therefore he “cannot sin” in a habitual manner since through the new birth he possesses God’s life and can now yield to the life of God for

victory. Plummer explains: “A child of God may sin; but his normal condition is one of resistance to sin.”

Dr. Lehman Strauss concludes:

“What is in view here is not the committal of some act of sin, but the continuance of sin; not the possibility of sin, but the practice of sin. One continuing in sin as a practice of life has not God’s seed in him.”

All of these texts point to an ongoing and outward display of transformation in righteous living which gives solid and Biblical evidence that one is a genuine believer. The expressions “doeth” (1 John 2:29; 3:7) and “doth not commit” (1 John 3:9) speaks of a habitual lifestyle of righteous living and a lifestyle that is not characterized by constant sinning. Living a life of transformation becomes a secondary confirmation that one possesses the new birth and eternal life while the primary confirmation is our faith in God’s Son and the promise of eternal life (1 John 5:10-13).

On the other hand, when a person continually sows to their flesh and follows the devil, without demonstrating regenerating life, it proves that they are of the devil or the wicked one (1 John 3:12, 5:18-19). In short, it proves they are a child of the devil and not a child of God (1 John 3:8). The expression “committeth sin” (1 John 3:8) in its present tense once again speaks of a habitual lifestyle of sin, or a life that is only characteristic of sin, which proves that this type of person has not received the divine birth and nature of God.

1 John 3:8

“He that committeth sin (continually and habitually practices sin as characteristic of one’s life – as the present-tense participle indicates) is of the devil (is the devil’s child); for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (the sinful works generated by the devil that are used to control our lives).

The bottom line is this. If you live like the devil (John 8:44), you are going to a devil’s hell (Matt. 25:41). The unbeliever primarily lives for himself and sin. But John reveals the opposite is true of Christians. All genuine believers live differently than the unsaved of this world. They will manifest fruit and transformation in their lives. Although there are many different levels of spirituality connected within the Christian life, one thing is certain; all

Christians to practice righteous living. There will be transformation of living that is practiced and witnessed within their lives as opposed to a pattern of disobedience and defiance against God's will and purposes.

John Ritchie states:

"The one who abides in Him is not here a spiritual Christian in contrast to a carnal Christian; this is a born-again person in contrast to one who is not saved. The born-again person is seen as one who habitually abides in Christ; that person does not habitually practice sin. This does not suggest that the believer never commits one single act of sin but he will not habitually live a life of sin. A sinful life does not mark a child of God"

1 John 5:18

"We know that whosoever is born of God (possessing God's new life and nature) sinneth not ("that every one having been born of God not is sinning" as a pattern of life and in a permanent way - as the present-tense verb indicates); but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself (from an unbroken pattern of sin and way of life), and that wicked one (the devil) toucheth him not" (does not overcome his life and keep him bound to sin because of the new nature residing in him).

The child of God will no longer live in a permanent state of sin without evidencing fruit and transformation of new life. Furthermore, they can no longer be "touched" by the devil (be totally recaptured and live constantly under the devil's dictates and power as in their prior unsaved state – Eph. 2:1-2). The believer now possesses victory over the wicked one and "sinneth not," as a pattern or way of life, since God's life and nature is residing in him (Phil. 2:13). In short, God's children are no longer overcome by the "wicked one" since in Christ they have overcome the world (1 John 5:4-5) and no longer are bound to the "works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

Edmond Hiebert appropriately remarks:

"Satan will assail the believer, but his slimy fingers will never regain an abiding grip on the redeemed soul. His attacks may be vicious and inspire fear, but the promise is that he will never destroy the true child of God."

7. The CONFIRMATION of a person's salvation through answered prayer by God.

1 John 5:14-15

“And this is the confidence that we have in him (in our saving union and relationship with God through Christ), that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

Answered prayer is always a wonderful blessing and becomes another added sign that we are God’s child. We can be confident about getting answers to our prayers because we are “in him” and this becomes another positive confirmation of our salvation. We can know that God is part of our life when we are praying and seeing answers to our prayers.

➤ James’ Statements

There are many who have misunderstood what James was teaching, even Martin Luther himself, who declared the authenticity of James’ epistle by calling it “a right strawy epistle.”

James 2:21-22

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?”

James 2:23-24 adds:

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way?”

Many have wrongly interpreted the statement and conclusion of James to mean that justification is by works and not by grace alone. In other words, a person needs grace but they also must live according to law and legalism, so they can be guaranteed acceptance before God and a final entrance into Heaven.

Many times those who espouse this interpretation ignore what James records in James 2:23 which states, “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

James is not contradicting Paul's teaching on justification by faith alone. Paul argued for the *priority* of faith over works in regard to a person's salvation (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16) while James argued for the *proof* of faith (James 2:26), through a changed life, which becomes a secondary marker that proves the genuineness of a person's salvation experience.

James is talking about a belief that behaves. He is teaching that all genuine belief in Christ will eventually result in a change of behavior. James has a practical application in mind, regarding how works give evidence of true saving faith. He was not sharing the theological truth of how people are legally justified before God but how their life verifies their justification before God. The *prerequisite* for salvation is faith; however, the *product* of salvation is works. This passage of Scripture is teaching that a change in behavior always accompanies genuine faith (saving faith) which is placed in Christ.

I. Dead faith (2:14, 17, 20, 26)

James 2:14

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

James 2:17

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

James 2:20

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"

James 2:26

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

A "dead" faith is a faith without works. It is a lifeless faith that never produces the fruit of transformation; therefore, it is a fraudulent type of faith that is not genuine or real.

It has been well stated:

"There are many professors but few possessors."

James is arguing for the importance of a living and dynamic faith that gives evidence of regenerating life by the good works a person does. James does not doubt that “faith alone in Christ” is the way of salvation. Instead, he is teaching that a certain kind of faith, a spurious faith, which does not translate into eventual sanctification or transformation of living, is not the type of faith that saves.

William MacDonald stated:

“True faith and works are inseparable. The first produces the second, and the second evidences the first.”

II. Distinct illustration (2:15-16)

James 2:15-16

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

James now gives an illustration to prove his doctrinal thesis that faith in Christ alone will eventually translate into fruitful living. A person may talk (“one of you say”) about extending mercy to someone in need (“Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled”), but then fail to actually extend mercy to them (“give them not those things which are needful to the body”). If this is the case, there is no “profit” in what the person says (Gal. 6:10). A person is all talk. He is a bag of hot air. The same is true in relationship to faith and works. In other words, a person can say they have faith in Christ; however, in works (the outward expression of good works) they can deny this profession or claim. They are all talk but there is no evidence that they have placed faith in Christ and received a new way of life.

Titus 1:16 says something similar:

“They profess that they know God; but in works (their lack of expressing good works and transformation of living) they deny him, being abominable (CHARACTER), and disobedient (CONDUCT), and unto every good work reprobate.” (CUT OFF).

This means that they are rejected by God because they are unsaved which is proven by their failure to manifest a change of life and pass the “life test.”

III. Distorted thinking (2:18, 20)

Here is James 2:18 & 20 with some running commentary:

Verse 18 - "Yea, a man may say (an imaginary objector trying to make a distinction between the person who has faith and works), Thou hast faith (a person that has faith alone in Christ for salvation), and I have works (a person that only works for his justification before God and salvation): (James is now replying to objector) shew me thy faith without thy works (the faith alone in Christ position without any follow up of works or transformation of life – what the new Jewish converts were teaching), and I will shew thee my faith by my works (the faith alone in Christ position with the confirmation of salvation by good works – what James was teaching). ...

Verse 20 - But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (faith without any transformation of living is an indication of a sham or counterfeit faith, a faith that was not genuine and real at the time of one's alleged conversion to Christ).

James is very clear on the teaching that faith alone in Christ saves a person, but the "faith alone" in Christ that saves will eventually be manifested in outward change.

The old axiom is true:

"Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone."

James calls this person "a vain man" (James 2:20), or a foolish man, since he was teaching that faith does not demonstrate any transformation of living. James was writing to Jews (James 1:1) who probably abandoned the false teaching of the "works righteousness" of Judaism. However, these same Jews may have embraced the mistaken notion that since righteous works and obedience were not necessary for salvation, they were not necessary at all to substantiate and verify the genuine character of one's faith.

IV. Demonic faith (2:19)

James continues speaking in 2:19 in answering the objector:

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

Demons are essentially orthodox in their doctrine (Matt. 8:29, 30; Mark 5:7; Luke 4:41; Acts 19:15). Demons are not atheists. They believe there is only “one God” (monotheism) and shudder at the thought of their accountability to Him. They also believe in the deity of Christ (Matt. 8:29). However, orthodox doctrine by itself, saying the apostle’s creed, is no proof of saving faith.

With all of their intellectual belief and confession, demons still are not saved. The fact that demons do not live a transformed way of life and surrender to God’s will indicates that their intellectual faith is spurious, or false. Therefore, their doctrine is not backed by duty. Their trembling is not backed by transformation. As a result, demons have not proven that their belief or faith is genuine.

V. Defending examples (2:21-26)

James now gives some examples that will defend his teaching about faith and works. True saving faith (faith alone in Christ) is eventually evidenced through sanctification. Belief always behaves! Here are the examples.

a. The example of Abraham (James 2:21-24)

1. The proof of justification (works)

James 2:21

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works (in the sense that works give proof or evidence before others that a person is justified in God’s presence), when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”

This text does NOT say that Abraham was justified by works back in Genesis chapter 12 when his salvation began. A thousand times no! Abraham was justified by works later on in his life when he offered Isaac on the altar (Gen. 22). His actual justification before God occurred back in Genesis 12, the time when his adventure of faith began, as recorded in Genesis 15:6.

This leaves us with a question. In what way was Abraham justified “when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?” Abraham offered Isaac on the altar in Genesis 22. The answer to our question is simple. Abraham’s works justified him in the sense that these works validated and confirmed his faith in God, as being genuine and real; therefore, his faith, since it was genuine, had resulted in him receiving a righteous standing before God. In other

words, Abraham was justified by works before Isaac when he gave evidence of his obedient faith.

James 2:22 adds these words:

“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works (after salvation) was faith made perfect?”

James is once again talking about the type of faith that results in transformation of living. All true faith results in a change of behavior. In other words, when Abraham obeyed God, his faith reached its intended goal (“perfect”) of obedience and sanctification. The sacrifice of Abraham’s son (Gen. 22) was the crowning point of his obedient faith. Therefore, his *obedient* faith (evidenced before others) became the *proof* of his justifying faith before God. Abraham’s obedience proved or substantiated the genuine character of his faith, which in return, verified that Abraham had already been justified before God through faith alone.

2. The root of justification (faith)

James 2:23 concludes:

“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

James adds these words to prove that Abraham had *already* been justified back in Genesis 12 when he believed God’s Abraham Covenant promise.

Abraham’s justification took place at the time of his initial faith in God’s promise (Genesis 12). However, the proof of his justification took place when he offered Isaac (Genesis 22).

James begins with the proof of Abraham’s justification before God (offering Isaac - James 1:21-22) to verify the root of justification (Abraham’s faith in God’s promise – James 2:23).

Yes, Abraham was justified by works (James 2:21). However, his works were NOT the *ground* (basis) of his justification before God (Rom. 5:9) but the *proof* of his justification before God. There is a difference!

James 2:23 once again reads:

“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

This is a quotation from Genesis 15:6 (which is looking back to Genesis 12) and it categorically denies that James was teaching salvation by works (Rom. 4:3-5). Abraham simply believed God’s revelation and was justified. James agrees with Paul that justification (imputed righteousness and legal acquittal before God) is based upon faith alone in Christ alone (Gal. 2:16). In fact, Abraham was legally acquitted before God and declared righteous, through faith, before he had performed any spiritual works. How do I know this? Genesis 12 comes before Genesis 22! In Genesis 12 was Abraham’s justification but in Genesis 22 was the proof of his justification.

The point James is making is that when Abraham obeyed God, he gave proof of his justification before God, on the basis of his works, which ten chapters later in the book of Genesis were evidenced by his obedience. God knows no justification in His sight which is not eventually evidenced or confirmed by sanctification and obedience. In fact, James brings this out in the next verse.

James 2:24

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified (in the sense that works give proof that a person is justified before God), and not by faith only”

When James says, “not by faith only” he is NOT denying that faith in Christ is all that is needed for justification before God and salvation from hell (Romans 3:28; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:11, 24). What he is referring to is that you can’t know there is true and genuine justification unless there has been a change or transformation in your character and conduct. There MUST be fruit evidenced in a person’s life for a person’s salvational faith to be real.

Matthew 13:8

“But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”

b. The example of Rahab (2:25)

James 2:25 declares:

“Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works (in the sense that works give proof or evidence before others that a person is justified in God’s presence), when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”

Rahab saved the lives of God’s servants and gave proof that she was justified before God (Heb. 11:31). She was “justified by works” in the sense that God validated and confirmed her justified position in the presence of others when she desired to follow His ways. In summary, people are *justified before God by faith* but they are *justified by works* before others. Abraham sacrificed his son, Rahab helped the spies, and Noah built an ark. All of these Old Testament figures confirmed their justification before God through their outward acts of obedience. Viable faith always becomes visible faith.

Justification before God is *based* on the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9) but it’s *confirmed* through transformed living (2 Pet. 1:10). This is what James is talking about in all of these verses. Belief behaves!

c. The example of the human body (2:26)

James 2:26

“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (a non-genuine faith that has no confirming or validating proof of justification).

Faith and deeds (works) are essential to each other even as the body needs the human spirit to be alive. When the body dies the spirit leaves the body and goes to the place of its choosing. A body that does not possess a human spirit is lifeless and dead. It is good for nothing. A corpse does not possess any signs of life. It has no visible heartbeat or movement.

In a similar way, faith that does NOT translate into transformation of living is a dead faith. This means it is without life, since it does not give any signs, or evidences of fruit, which in return proves that it is a spurious or counterfeit faith.

A minister once talked to a man who professed conversion, and he asked, “Have you united with the church?” “No, I haven’t,” the man replied. “The dying thief never united with the church, and he went to heaven.” The

minister asked, "Have you ever sat at the Lord's table?" "No, the dying thief never did, and he was accepted" was the answer.

The minister went on to ask, "Have you been baptized?" "No," he said, "the dying thief was never baptized, and he went to heaven." "Have you given to missions?" "No, the dying thief did not give to missions, and he was not judged for it" was the reply. The disgusted minister then said to the man, "Well, my friend, the difference between you two seems to be that he was a dying thief and you are a living thief."

This man demonstrated that his faith was not real because he wanted to rob God of His rightful rule over his life. The Scriptures speak for themselves: "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). Paul concludes, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves ..." (2 Cor. 13:5).

D.L. Moody often said:

"Every Bible should be bound in shoe leather."

It is also said that D. L. Moody was once accosted on a Chicago street by a drunk who exclaimed, "Aren't you Mr. Moody? Why, I'm one of your converts." Said Moody in reply, "That must be true, for you surely aren't one of the Lord's."

➤ **Overcoming Statements in Revelation**

Many conditional salvationists (those who believe they must earn their salvation) have tried to use the statements in the Book of Revelation, which deal with the overcoming or victorious saints, as a way to teach salvation by works. In other words, a person must overcome or be victorious in his Christian life (living above all sin and failure) in order to be saved and make sure he squeezes into Heaven at the end of his life. Of course, these verses are not teaching this.

The overcomers in Revelation chapter 2-3 are viewed as all saints who have positionally overcome in Christ (1 John 5:4-5). Through faith in Christ and their subsequent position in His death and resurrection victory, all the saints have overcome Satan and the world system. The overcomers are not a special class of saints that possess victory and as a result get into Heaven because of their overcoming legalistic works. Their position and eternal

blessings never change because of their union with Christ's victory. The overcomers are challenged to live victoriously in this life in view of their position in Christ and the eternal rewards that await them for faithful service. They are not challenged to live victoriously in order to merit Heaven, keep their name in the Book of Life, or escape the second death, since they already have these blessings based upon their grace-relationship with Christ.

Positional Overcoming from John's Perspective

Exegetical Facts

- The overcoming passages deal with positional overcoming through one's identification with Christ as introduced by John in 1 John 5:4-5. They are promises – not commands or warnings.
- The overcomers rewards (Rev. 2:10, 23, 25; 3:11) are separated from the overcoming promises, which means that overcomers (all saints) will be rewarded in direct proportion to how they have lived out their overcoming position.
- Good works (practicing one's overcoming position) is additional and separate from being an overcomer (the positional victory that all believers possess in Christ).
- The overcomers (Rev. 12:11; 15:2; 17:14) are contrasted to the unsaved (Rev. 21:6-8, 27; 22:14-15) which is yet another confirmation that the overcomers are not a special elite group of Christians but all believers who have overcome through faith in Christ – in contrast to those who have not overcome through faith in Christ (unbelievers).
- The overcoming promises serve as encouragement for the saints in each church to be faithful to God in view of what lies ahead for all of God's redeemed saints. Their overcoming position and promises should motivate them or give them incentive to carry on and hold fast.

- The overcoming passages are not presenting the WAY of salvation but the CONFIRMATION of the saint's salvation through their positional salvation and victory in Christ.
- The promises are not based on their good works but their rewards are conditioned upon their faithfulness.

Exegesis of the Passages

1 John 5:4-5

“For whatsoever *(a reference to the human spirit)* **is born of God overcometh the world** *(positional victory through the new birth whereby our spirit is given new life and the new nature or disposition): and this is the victory that overcometh the world* *(a positional victory over the blindness and power of Satan that occurs at salvation), even our faith* *(our faith placed in Christ at the time of salvation).* **Who is he that overcometh the world** *(positionally victory over the world system headed up by Satan), but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”* *(which results in the believing overcomer being identified in Christ's victory).*

Revelation 2:7

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches *(where believers were present); To him that overcometh* *(positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5)* **will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God”** *(promise given to all believers who are positional overcomers).*

Revelation 2:11

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches *(where believers were present); He that overcometh* *(positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and Rev. 2:7)* **shall not be hurt of the second death”** *(promise given to all believers who are positional overcomers).*

Revelation 2:17

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches *(where believers were present); To him that overcometh* *(positional victory*

through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and Rev. 2:7, 11) will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it (promises given to all believers who are positional overcomers).

Revelation 2:26

“And he that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and Rev. 2:7, 11, 17*), **and keepeth my works unto the end** (*practice of the overcoming position – separate from the position - an added proof of one’s salvation*), **to him will I give power over the nations**” (*reigning privileges in the Millennium which all saints will have – Rev. 5:10 - howbeit in varying degrees, according to their service and living for Christ – 2 Pet. 1:11; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 12:28; Matt. 5:19; 18:4*).

Revelation 3:5

“He that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26*), **the same shall be clothed in white raiment** (*the righteousness of Christ, whom they have believed in, which is a blessing for all overcomers*); **and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels**” (*promises given to all the overcomers that have believed in Christ*).

Revelation 3:12

“Him that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5*) **will I make a pillar in the temple of my God** (*permanent residency in Heaven*), **and he shall go no more out** (*individual security*): **and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God** (*special identity*), **which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name**” (*personal intimacy with God*).

Revelation 3:21

“To him that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as stated in 1 John 5:4-5 and Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12*) **will I grant to sit with me in my throne** (*promised reigning privileges in Millennium*), **even as I also overcame** (*providing our salvation through His victorious death and resurrection*), **and am set down with my Father in his throne**” (*PROVING*

our salvation is complete as He sits upon the throne of Heaven – Heb. 1:3: 12:2).

Revelation 21:7

“He that overcometh (*positional victory through believing in Christ as revealed in 1 John 5:4-5 and Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21*) **shall inherit all things** (*promise of Heaven and the eternal as stated in Rev. 21:1-5*); and **I will be his God, and he shall be my son**” (*promise of eternal fellowship with God in contrast to unbelievers as in Rev. 21:8*).

Revelation 12:11 is an additional note that follows the same line of positional victory for all overcomers: **“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb** (*their positional victory through the blood of Christ*), **and by the word of their testimony** (*their confession of this victory*); **and they loved not their lives unto the death**” (*the ultimate sacrifice when clinging to this victory*).

These are the overcoming promises that God has given to the seven churches and each one of us today as believers. These promises are teaching the PROOF and CONFIRMATION of one’s salvation before God because of their overcoming position in Christ as introduced by John in 1 John 5:4-5. These future promises given to the overcomers are designed to *confirm* (reassure) the Christians that they are saved, provide *comfort* or encouragement (exhortation) while facing life’s difficulties and persecutions, and also provide continued incentive to remain faithful to the end (“be thou faithful unto death” – Rev. 2:10) in view of Christ’s imminent return (Rev. 2:25; 3:3, 11).

➤ **Chastening statements**

Revelation 2:5 says:

“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

God chastens His children (“I will come unto thee quickly”) and sometimes brings temporal judgment (not eternal judgment) upon their personal lives here on earth to get their attention. Jesus warns these believers that they can lose their “candlestick” (a lampstand which portrays light) which refers to

their testimony - not their salvation. A church can lose its light in a community when sin is running rampant in it. And God will sometimes see to it that this is exactly what happens. In this case, God chastens these saints to discipline them – not to damn them to hell.

Revelation 3:15-17

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

Revelation 3:19

“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

Again, we see by this verse that God will chasten His own saints in order to discipline their lives – not damn them to an everlasting hell. God loves His children too much to give them hell (“As many as I love” with Romans 8:38-39).

The Corinthians are another example of Christians who are chastened. Abuses crept in to the hearts of God’s children in relation to the love feast and the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-21). They were drinking alcoholic wine during the love feast that preceded the observance of the Lord’s Supper. They would then enter the communion service in a drunken state and stupor.

Paul goes back to the original institution of this supper. He shows them that it was not to be like a common meal or a feast, but a solemn ordinance of the Lord that needed to be reverently observed. God would have to judge them for this deplorable and detestable action of drunken debauchery in the Lord’s House and at the Lord’s Table. The chastening experience of the Corinthians had nothing to do with the loss of their *salvation* but the loss of their *physical life* (1 Cor. 11:30). God does not allow His saints to go on in sin forever, especially the type of sin that utterly shames Christ’s character and name.

1 Corinthians 11:32

“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

This statement or fact proves that those who are not chastened by God are unsaved and will experience God's wrath and judgment in hell.

You will notice that God chastens His children so they do NOT experience the condemnation of sinners who are outside of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:1). In other words, the sin of the Corinthians was worthy of the judgment of God but His chastening and correction proves that they are God's children and that their particular sin cannot bring them under the judgment of God.

They were one of His children and therefore could not experience hell and condemnation which sinners face. Paul's is NOT teaching the reprobation of lost sinners but the restoration of God's children. God's eternal judgment is withheld from these carnal Christians because they are one of His children and this gives proof of their eternal salvation. This is understood because God was chastening them and seeking to bring correction into their lives. If the saints fail to respond to His chastening and stubbornly continue these sinful atrocities, then God reserves the right to bring physical judgment upon their bodies and visit them with a premature death (1 John 5:16).

God deals with us as we would deal with our children. He loves us too dearly to allow us to go on in sin. Therefore, we soon feel the shepherd's crook on our necks pulling us back to Himself.

As someone has said:

"It is possible for the saints to be fit for heaven (in Christ) but not fitted to remain on the earth in testimony."

Hebrews 12:6-7 says, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

Chastening is not designed to *threaten* our salvation but to actually *confirm* our salvation and that we are one of God's children. The fact is clearly stated in these verses that if we are NOT chastened, it proves we were NEVER saved in the first place. God loves His children and chastens them in order to bring them to their spiritual senses and restore their fellowship with Him. God does not chasten us to remove our salvation and then give us salvation all over again. This is not what the Bible teaches. Just the opposite is true.

God chastens us to PROVE that we are His children and that we can NEVER be lost from Him.

- **Challenge and Instruction Statements for Healthy Christian Living.**

These statements give proof of one's salvation – they do not threaten Christians about losing their salvation. If a person has tunnel vision in regards to “conditional salvation” they will read almost any verse in the Bible that deals with faithfulness in the Christian life, falling into sin, or keeping oneself pure, as proof positive that a person can stop doing these things and in the end lose his salvation.

Of course, those who embrace a conditional security fail to see that there are many challenges and warnings given to Christians, not to place them back under law, creating the fear that they can lose their salvation, but instead are given as incentives to keep Christians living the abundant life (John 10:10), providing them with direction for godly living, and helping them to maintain a healthy state in their Christian experience. In summary, verses dealing with the Christian life are never designed to threaten Christians about their eternal life and salvation before the throne of God.

1 Peter 5:8 gives this advice:

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”

Peter is warning believers about the attempts of the devil to come before us in order to defeat our lives. Sometimes he comes as a roaring lion bringing out all of the artillery. At other times he comes as a crafty snake or an angel of light. This is what the Bible teaches.

However, some will read a verse such as this which deals with living the Christian life and assume that if one is overtaken by the devil that this person loses their salvation. It's believed that when was is devoured by the devil results in damnation of the soul. Of course, this is reading something into this verse, and many other similar verses talking about the Christian life, which simply give instruction, incentive and warning to Christians about the pitfalls and temptations of life. They are challenges which are given to encourage believers to live a healthy and rewarding Christian life. They are not challenges that are given to incite fear that one can lose their salvation if they

fall into one of the traps of the devil or find themselves following a wrong path that has been revealed to them in the apostolic instruction.

Once again, the many warnings that are given to Christians are not designed to teach that Christians can lose their salvation; they are incentives that are given to keep living the Christian life in the midst of temptation, difficulties, and the tests of life.

1 Timothy 5:8 warns:

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

In the context of providing for the needs of widows, Paul reminds these saints that there should be support for widows within the immediate family. He reminds the importance of providing for the basic needs of one’s own family. Failure to do so makes a person worse than an infidel (unbeliever). You will notice that Paul is not saying that a person actually becomes an unbeliever when they fail to supply the needs of the family but by comparison they are acting like one even as the Corinthians acted like unbelievers in their carnal state (1 Cor. 3:1-3). We must remember that a Christian can commit carnal acts of sin without losing one’s salvation. Carnality is a sign that a Christian is not maturing or advancing in their Christian life as they should.

1 Timothy 6:20-21

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings (empty sounds and voices that have no doctrinal content and positive contribution to spiritual development), and oppositions of science (manmade knowledge that goes against the truth) falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.

These verses are sometimes interpreted to mean that if a Christian veers off the beaten path and is led into some type of error, that this person will be condemned to die the sinner’s death in hell. Of course, it takes a wild imagination to read this into these verses. This is simply a warning directed to Christians to remain faithful to the truth, stay committed to the main thing, and not become obsessed with empty and futile teachings. It has nothing to do with losing one’s soul if they don’t measure up to some specific standard.

2 Peter 3:17

Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

Peter is talking to Christians and is concerned about God's people being led astray into the errors being propagated by false teachers who corrupt and imitate the truth. It is easy for an unsuspecting believer to fall from their spiritual "stedfastness" or from their stability and security in the truth. Many claim this refers to a Christian losing one's salvation but once again this is simply a warning designed to keep Christians alert to false teaching and its subtle errors. The Bible does not say that we can fall from our salvation but from our stedfastness in relation to various Bible truths and teachings that relate to doctrine and Christian living.

2 Peter 1:10 is another warning verse:

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

One way we confirm our election in Christ is by our transformation of living. Of course, good works is not the way of election but is evidence of election. When we obey what Peter has written in his epistle about living the Christian life (sanctification) then we can be sure that we won't fall into debilitating sin and become defeated in our Christian life. The warning is not intended to teach that we can fall from our salvation position before God but from the standpoint of our spiritual living when we allow sin to control us. A Christian can fall in relation to their spiritual living without falling away from God losing his or her salvation.

2 John 1:8

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

This reminds Christians that they can lose their reward – not their salvation. There is a difference! We should be aware that when we do not align our lives to truth and spiritual living that there will be loss of reward when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, reward which we otherwise could have received, if we had remained faithful to the truth and more committed in our spiritual living.

1 Corinthians 9:27 is a similar verse dealing with loss of reward:

“But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

In this verse Paul is NOT talking about being disqualified from Heaven but being disqualified from receiving reward when he stands before the Judgment Seat of Christ. The context of this passage is talking about reward (1 Cor. 9:24-25) - not meriting or maintaining one's salvation.

Revelation 2:4-5

“Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”

Many read into this statement that a person loses their salvation when they don't love Jesus Christ the way they used to love Him. This kind of reasoning is once again reading into a text something that is not inferred. What is the degree of love that will cause us to lose our salvation? Is it 99%, 85%, 50% or 35%? Of course, no one knows and this once again proves the error of ascribing works to obtaining and maintain one's salvation before God. Christians may not always love Christ in the exact same manner but this does not mean they lose their salvation. The fact of the matter is this; we may leave our love for Christ but Christ has promised that He will never leave us (Heb. 13:5).

Revelation 3:16-17

“So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”

Some conclude that being “lukewarm” means that you lose your salvation as a Christian and God judges you as an unsaved person. This is once again erroneous to conclude since the very context demonstrates that God chastens those who are lukewarm because He continues to love them as His children. We know that God does not chasten those who are not His children (Heb. 12:6). Therefore, a lukewarm person is not a Christian that has lost his salvation but a Christian that has lost his commitment, zeal, and excitement in serving and living for the Lord.

Hebrews 3:12

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

The direct address to “brethren” shows that his readers are genuine believers and not apostates who were never saved. To “take heed” calls for moral and spiritual vigilance.

The term “apostasy” is based upon the verb for departure which means to remove and revolt. However, there is certainly an apostasy (departure) in relation to spiritual living and believers, which results in giving up earthly blessings, and there is a doctrinal apostasy (departure) which is the mark of unsaved people. Both types of departures are prompted by a decision not to believe. The believer may depart from God by not trusting in Him for daily spiritual living and power while the unbeliever departs from God by failing to believe in God’s truth and plan for eternal salvation.

Again, some will conclude that if a Christian departs from God that he is lost and God has abandoned him. But we all know from personal experience that we can depart from God and lack faith in God’s truth and purpose for our life. Departing from God does not mean that God departs from us since nothing can separate from God’s love (Rom. 8:38-39). We can lose a God-focus in life and find ourselves moving away from God will and purpose for our life.

There are hundreds of verses addressed to Christians that deal with warnings, temptations, false teaching, money, and many other subjects that are relevant to living the Christian life. However, these verses are not mentioned to threaten Christians with the loss of their salvation if they don’t toe the line perfectly. Instead, these verses are given as incentives to live the Christian life, enhance their spiritual living, and aid them in their fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Conditional salvationists turn simple admonitions that are designed to help Christians live a holy life into threats and statements of fear regarding the loss of one’s salvation. As mentioned previously, if one’s theology allows a Christian to lose his or her salvation, then every verse is viewed through this lens.

In other words, whenever incentives and warnings are given to a Christian, they are used as proof texts that one can lose their salvation. However, if a

person knows what God has promised and given to every believer (an eternal justified position before God through the saving merits of Jesus Christ – Heb. 7:25) they will understand that these verses are given to help us – not condemn us to hell, encourage us – not judge us in hell, teach us – not terrorize us about hell, and guide us to walk with God – not separate us from God.

Hebrews 12:14

“Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

The instruction is given that Christians should strive for peaceable relations with all people and at all times. We are not to be at odds with our neighbors or any people but seek to always promote peaceful relations.

Elsewhere the Bible adds:

Romans 12:18

“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

It’s not always possible to live at peace with unbelievers and angry people but we are to strive to do this as much as possible and represent Christ before others in a peaceable manner and possess a peaceable spirit before others. Of course, this is not peace at any price. It does not mean we smoke the peace pipe with those that promote apostasy, abortion, and homosexuality. What it means is that we should strive to create peace with those who live with in life and not be known as an arrogant and ornery person in the community at large. We should not purposely try and stir up strife and division in the normal routine of life and as we come in contact with people.

Peaceful interpersonal relationships are to be our expression of godliness.

James 3:18

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

But what does “Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14) mean? This text is talking about the overall character and conduct of a person that is NOT saved and born again. It’s true that no person will ever see the Lord in Heaven if they live a habitual

and ongoing life of ungodliness, rebellion, and impurity before God. Why? It's because their rebellious life gives evidence that they were never born again or saved in the first place. A person who lives a habitual life of ungodliness demonstrates that he is not going to Heaven.

At salvation, God changes a person's spiritual nature. Before salvation we are free from righteousness (holiness) and enslaved only to sin (Rom 6:17, 20). At salvation we become free from sin and a slave to holiness (Rom 6:18). This radical change should become apparent after salvation and represent itself in a person's life.

This verse is not teaching that a person must live or maintain a holy life in order to get to Heaven. Holiness is not the **CONDITION** of salvation. If this were true, how much holiness is necessary – 100%, 99%, 75% or 50%? Nobody really knows and this understanding of the verse makes salvation a game of percentages. This is always the case when it comes to conditional salvation. Nobody can be sure where the line is and how obedient, how faithful, how loving, and how holy a person must be in order to maintain his salvation and merit Heaven.

Here's the point; holiness is the **CONFIRMATION** of one's salvation. People who manifest fruit, holiness, and transformation of living give evidence that they are saved and will one day see the Lord in Heaven. However, those who live for themselves and demonstrate no fruit of transformation throughout their years on earth will not see the Lord, since their consistent rebellion against God gives proof that they have not been saved. No person will ever step inside the gate of Heaven if they have not evidenced their salvation before God. In fact, no person will enter Heaven without holiness (Heb. 12:14) – as the evidence of salvation, without blood as the way of salvation (Heb. 9:22), and without faith as the means to salvation (Heb. 11:6).

Hebrews 12:15 then gives us this warning:

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled.”

You will notice that this is addressed to the Hebrew Christians. He warns them about being overcome by bitterness. Some teach that this is a warning designed to threaten our eternal security since we can “fail the grace of God”

which is often interpreted to mean that we can somehow sin away the day of grace and that God's grace will only keep us when we are living according to God's standard.

Of course, the Bible not only teaches that we are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8-9) but that we are also kept saved by God's grace since grace gives us the promise of eternal life (Rom. 5:21; Titus 3:7). Therefore, this Bible passage could not be teaching that God's grace fails us in some way and that we can sin away the day of grace. Actually, it's teaching just the opposite. God's grace does not fail us but we fail God's grace ("lest any man fail of the grace of God").

This means that a believer can "fail" (come short or be deficient) of the grace of God in that they do not take advantage of God's grace and allow God's sanctifying grace to rule in their hearts (Rom. 6). Instead, they allow bitterness to rule their hearts and lives and are defeated. If grace rules your life, then you won't be overcome by sin and bitterness. If self rules your life, then you have not allowed grace to transform you.

Hebrews 4:1-2

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

In our next major point, we will deal with some of the more well-known "if" passages in Hebrews that are often misunderstood and which are used to teach conditional salvation and the loss of one's salvation. However, these are some other passages in Hebrews which are also misunderstood.

This verse and the entire book of Hebrews actually counters or opposes the argument that a Christian can lose his salvation. The "fear" being talked about in this verse has to do with fearing God or possessing reverence and respect for Him, His truth, and righteous ways (2 Cor. 7:1). It is not referring to the fear of losing one's salvation is you don not measure up to God's standard. Israel needed to respect God's promise and believe that they could enter into the rest He promised them in the land of Canaan. However, the people expressed at Kadesh their unbelief in the power of God to perform what He had promised to the patriarchs.

In a similar way, the Hebrew Christians could also miss out on God's promised rest (salvation's rest) which comes through the message of the Gospel, if they doubt the sufficiency of Christ in the final redemptive price that Jesus paid on the cross.

The Hebrew Christians doubted their salvation (Heb. 6:11; 10:22). The author is desirous that, as they were diligent in the past, they would continue to be in the present in finding out the truth, so they might grow and mature in order to know the full assurance of their eternal life. These believers lacked assurance in the sufficiency of Christ's death because they were programmed to think of repeated sacrifices under the Mosaic Law but the epistle of Hebrews argues for one final sacrifice in Christ that takes away our sins forever (Heb. 10:12). Therefore, if the Hebrew Christians wanted to experience the wonderful promise of salvation's rest and eternal security through Christ final death on Calvary, they would have to believe God's promise in the Gospel that Christ died for their sins only once (Heb. 10:14) to save them forever and lives forever to keep them saved (Heb. 7:25).

If one doubts the sufficiency of Christ, they cannot experience the true salvation rest that can only come through faith alone in Christ alone. If you don't rely fully and completely on the promise of salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ alone, then you will doubt your salvation and not enter into the blessing of salvation's rest, which is the comfort and release of knowing that we are saved completely and forever through the sacrifice of Christ.

Hebrews 4:10-11

"For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."

If we are ever going to find the rest and peace that comes from salvation, we will have to completely and only trust in Christ's saving work on Calvary's cross and in so doing we will have as the Bible declares "ceased from his own works" (stop trying to save ourselves and complete our salvation – vs. 10). The word "labour" (strive earnestly – vs. 11) does not suggest that Christians must put forth an effort to keep themselves saved and fit for Heaven. It speaks of urgency, attentiveness, and quickness in decision making. In other words, these Hebrew Christians should immediately get their act together and claim their rest in Christ's finished work. Instead of

dabbling around in the Mosaic sacrifices (the shadows of the past) they needed to gain assurance of their salvation in Christ alone by depending upon His finished and final sacrifice.

The term “fall” (vs. 11) and falling is the opposite of standing or advancing. To fall as Israel fell in the wilderness by not believing in God’s promise means to lose out on the gracious provisions and promises that God wants to give us. When we lack faith in the finished work of Christ we miss out on salvation’s true rest and inner peace. The Hebrew Christians and any person who doubts the sufficiency of Christ for his salvation and fails to believe in His promise of eternal salvation does not advance and progress in their Christian life.

Shame on Christians when they come to faith in Christ but then through false teaching doubt Christ’s sufficiency on their behalf through the observance of various rituals and legalistic practices. This is what the Galatians did (Gal. 3:2-3) and the Hebrew Christians were in danger of doing this as well in relation to the Old Testament sacrificial system. Our salvation from start to finish has nothing to do with us. It’s completely and eternally rooted in Jesus Christ alone. If you believe this Gospel truth and promise that Christ’s sacrifice is enough to save you forever, then you will discover the blessing of Gospel rest. You will enter in to the rest that can only come from trusting in the sufficiency of Christ (Matt. 11:28).

Philippians 2:12

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

This verse is speaking on sanctification in the Christian life and is probably the most misunderstood verse in the Bible. But look what this verse is NOT saying. It’s not teaching that a Christian works FOR his salvation. It’s actually teaching that a Christian is supposed to “work out” his own salvation by possessing a healthy fear of God in his life. Working *out* one’s salvation is not the same thing as working *for* one’s salvation. The Bible is teaching that we are to give evidence of our life-transforming and sanctifying salvation by allowing God to work through our hearts and lives.

Philippians 2:13

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

This verse explains the previous verse. It's is God that is working on the inside of our hearts to give us new incentives in life and deliver us from our sins. This is what it means "to work out your salvation" as previously stated in Philippians 2:12. It means to allow God to work in your heart and life so that your life will give evidence that God has saved you and that you are living a new way of life. Working out your salvation means that you allow God to have His way in your heart and life, so that your life will evidence godliness, righteousness, and transformation of character. These verses have nothing to do with working for your salvation or earning, maintaining, and legalistically acquiring one's salvation before God.

1 Timothy 6:12

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses" (probably a reference is Timothy's confession or testimony of faith in possessing eternal life in Christ at the time of his baptism, when many witnesses were no doubt present).

This verse dealing with the Christian life has sometimes been used to teach that a person must strive to earn eternal life by living a life of good works. But once again this is a misinterpretation and misleading conclusion since nowhere in Scripture does the Bible teach that eternal life is something that is earned (John 3:16; 6:47). Timothy is not told to *possess* eternal life since he already possessed eternal life as a free gift (Rom. 6:23). What Timothy is asked to do is *practice* or experience eternal life in relation to his daily living. It means to make eternal life part of our everyday experience right now.

The English words "lay hold" translates in the Greek language "to seize" or "take hold of" and has the meaning of allowing the message about eternal life to impact our life in a positive and sanctifying way. First, we are called upon to experiencing the wonder and amazement of the eternal life that we possess in Christ. We should allow the reality that we possess eternal life to motivate us and stir us on to serve the Lord.

Second, it would also mean to live in light of eternal life or live with eternities values in view. The truth about possessing eternal life should seize our

hearts or grab hold of our hearts. It should take hold of us and impact our daily lives. As we allow the message and indwelling reality of eternal life that we possess to change us “the things of earth will grow strangely dim.”

When we lay hold of the message about eternal life and the reality that we possess eternal life, it will change us. We will never get over the wonder of it all. We will never forget what God has given to us freely. We will not seek to live for things on this earth but for things that will matter for eternity. When we lay hold of eternal life we will strive to live for those things that will matter forever (Matt. 6:33). In simple terms and paraphrased, we are to “get a grip” on the reality of eternal life, grasp both the greatness and importance of eternal life, so that we will never get over the wonder and joy of our salvation, and so we might live and minister in the light of eternity.

Jude 1:21

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Some suggest that a person must keep themselves in the love of God by living a godly life or doing good deeds. Those who teach conditional salvation teach that only as we live a life of obedience and good works can we take advantage of God’s love and earn our way into Heaven. However, if one interprets the verse in this way they are really saying that God’s love is conditioned on our obedience and not the sacrifice of Christ.

A Christian does not keep themselves in God’s love, by somehow coaxing God to keep loving them through legal obedience, since God loves us unconditionally!

Romans 8:38-39

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

In Christ, God loves the believer unconditionally. We can be sure that we are not being told to preserve ourselves in God's favor. I don't have to do something to earn God's love. He loves me no matter what I do in my Christian life – good or bad! Do you love your children only when they obey

you? Do you stop loving them just because they make a wrong decision? No, you continue to love them and don't want to see them hurt themselves.

What does it mean when the Bible calls for the Christian to keep themselves in the love of God? The word "keep" means "to watch over" or "to keep an eye on." Keeping oneself in the love of God is not some kind of legalistic ritual but a commitment to maintain a relational walk with God where we are enjoying God's love for us as we walk in His presence (Ps. 16:11) and also expressing God's love to others (John 15:12). Keeping ourselves in the love of God means we will keep a guard about our lives so that we might not stop loving God and others as we should.

One thing is very evident; when a Christian keeps themselves in the love of God it means that they are keeping their life in tune with God so they can experience His precious love for them. They are keeping an eye on their relationship with God so they can experience the joy and wonder of His love and companionship in their life.

The Lord made a similar statement of keeping oneself in His love in John 15:9 when He said to His disciples, "Continue ye in my love" (abide in my love). In this context, continuing or keeping oneself in His love means that we are experiencing the warmth and joy of the love of God in an obedient, close, and intimate relationship with Him and that we are demonstrating God's love to others. This means we should continue to realize and experience His love that He has for us and to enjoy it in our everyday lives. In short, it means that we are experiencing God's love in our life through our relationship with Christ and through reaching out to others. God's love is being experienced in our life when we remain close to Him and reveal His love to others.

When a person loves God they will be obedient to Him – not to earn God's favor but to demonstrate their own love and loyalty to Him (John 15:10; 1 John 5:2-3). Therefore, a person who is experiencing God's love in his life will obey Christ and abide in Christ (John 15) which results in enjoying God's loving intimacy and also expressing God's love to others.

Every day we are to experience the wonder of God's love for us and also express His love to others as we obey Christ (John 15:10) and walk in a close relationship with the Lord. When we are keeping ourselves in the love

of God we will have a sense of His loving presence, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. We will continue to experience God's loving embrace and undying care over our lives as we keep guard over our relationship with God.

Keeping ourselves in the love of God means that we are striving to stay close to God through obedience and confession of sin (1 John 1:9) so we might enjoy His loving care, provision, and relational love for us as saints. We are to experience His Calvary love (John 3:16), caring love (Eph. 5:25-28, 33) and compassionate love (Lam. 3:22) on daily basis.

This verse in Jude 21 is telling us to stay and live in the sunshine of God's love. When we live in the sunshine of God's love we are sensing God's tremendous love that He has for us on a daily basis through the Holy Spirit's work taking place in our hearts and lives.

Romans 5:5

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad (poured forth) in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

The Holy Spirit points us to God's love for us and helps us to stay focused on God's love. This is not only true regarding God's love for us but the kind of love that we are to manifest in our daily lives toward others. The Holy Spirit keeps love blooming in our hearts toward God and others.

One thing is certain, when we are called upon to keep ourselves in the love of God it means that we are maintaining a close and intimate relationship with God so that we might experience the joy and wonder of His loving sacrifice, care, provision, mercy, and companionship in our lives. A person who keeps themselves in the love of God will enjoy God's love on their behalf since they are conscious of God's ever-present, undying, and intimate love for them (James 4:8).

"O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be."

The love of God is a steadfast love. Everything in life seems to fluctuate! But God's love for us never dies! God is always there for us, never giving up on us, and always wanting to draw us closer to Himself. God loves us because He wants to love us!!

It's important to realize that we must keep ourselves in God's love. This means it is our responsibility – not the preachers, your parents, wife, husband, a seminar, a book or anything else! We must make the effort to experience God's love by staying in fellowship with Him, confessing sin when it invades our life, maintaining a close relationship with Him, and sensing His intimate and personal love which God has for us. Keeping ourselves in the love of God means that we will allow His love to flood in our heart and life and allow it to overflow in the lives of others.

Have you been living in the sunshine? Have you been basking in the sunshine of God's love which He has for you and wants to convey to you on a daily basis?

“Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know;
Spirit, breathing from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so!
Oh, this full and perfect peace!
Oh, this transport all divine!
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.”

Galatians 5:1-4

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”

The word “fallen” means to abandon or drop away, to be driven away from grace. The claim is made that when we fall from grace we actually fall from God's favor and are no longer saved. In other words, we can commit some heinous sin and actually be severed from Christ and His grace. In essence, grace cannot save us if we do not live according to God's perfect standard.

Although this verse is always used by conditional salvationists as a proof text that a Christian can lose his salvation, it actually condemns those who teach conditional salvation. In other words, this text is actually condemning the legalist who moves away from the teaching of God's grace and mixes it with law. Paul is actually reprimanding them for trying to earn or merit their salvation. This is NOT a warning of falling away from salvation and being lost in hell. It is actually reprimanding those who teach that grace alone does not save them. The context concerns those who are trying to be saved by the law, especially through circumcision.

The phrase "fallen from grace" is not referring to falling away from justification or salvation (losing God's favor or grace) because you have committed some mortal sin or any sin for that matter. Many people misunderstand what Paul is teaching here. The Bible nowhere teaches that a person can fall from a position of saving grace. It teaches just the opposite.

Romans 5:1-2

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Let's give some exposition to this verse.

1. Our legal standing and acceptance before God – "being justified by faith" (Rom. 5:1a)

This means we are declared legally righteous in God's presence forever. The Greek form of this verb "declared righteous," or "justified," is not the present participle, which means "being declared righteous" (in the process of being declared righteous as Catholics teach through the means of good works) but rather the aorist participle, which means "having been declared righteous," or "justified." This means that it is looking back to a fact that happened at the time of our salvation which has continuing results today in our lives.

2. Our relationship before God – "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1b)

This means that we are no longer separated from God. Our relationship with God is no longer one of enmity but peace and reconciliation (Rom. 5:10).

Paul had been speaking of God's wrath being poured out on sinners (Rom. 1:18; 5:9). Those who stand justified in God's presence need not fear God's wrath, since Jesus Christ has made peace between them and God by His death which grants us freedom from God's wrath and judgment (Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:14). In other words, we have been given a peaceful relationship with God forever and God now accepts and loves us forever unconditionally.

3. Our access before God - "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand."

This means we have continuing access (privilege, approach and acceptance) into God's presence through our justified standing and our peaceful relationship that we possess before God. The idea here is that Jesus Christ enables us to enjoy a continuing relationship with God that is based upon our legal justified standing and reconciliation with God through the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ, since He takes away God's wrath, judgment and disfavor against us forever (Eph. 2:17-18; 3:12).

Our legal, justified standing, and peaceful relationship with God is defined as "this grace in which we stand." Paul is referring to the spiritual realm or state into which Christ's saving work transfers us when we believe on Him. In other words, when we stand in grace the believer continually possesses a position of acceptance before God's throne that is based upon the grace of God. This simply means we continually experience God's unmerited favor and kindness toward us, in our positional acceptance and peace that we have before God's throne, through the saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Note: This standing of grace before God's throne, which gives us acceptance and peace in God's presence, is only based upon Jesus Christ and His sufficient and eternal saving work on our behalf. Therefore, our standing (position in grace – God's favor) is not something that we can lose. It is constant, eternal, and secure.

This brings us back to Galatians 5:1-4. What does it mean to "fall" or drop away from and abandon God's grace? You don't fall out of a positional state of grace (from God's freely given favor and blessing in relation to salvation) but you can fall from a Biblical stance or teaching about the grace of God. The "falling" has to do with moving away from the doctrinal position of free grace or the Biblical teaching that only the grace of God can save you.

The context demands this interpretation since Paul teaches “that ye should not obey the truth” (verse 7) and “a little leaven (the leaven of legalism) leavens (sours) the whole teaching about grace (verse 9). Falling from grace is a truth issue – not a sin issue. In other words, the Galatians were in danger of misunderstanding grace and moving away from the free message of grace – how grace alone saves you forever.

God’s grace will never fail you but you can fail the grace of God (Heb. 12:15) by abandoning its teaching, its beauty, and miss its glorious and liberating message that Christ alone saved you, without human works, and that His death will secure and keep you forever.

Observe what Galatians 5:4 (“fallen from grace”) is teaching.

I. Stay Biblical

- a. Liberty is the truth that we should stand upon in relation to our salvation.

Galatians 5:1-4

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

Freedom and liberty is experienced in our life when we know and believe that Christ’s death is able to save us from God’s wrath and condemnation forever. Our liberty is experienced when we are freed from legalism (earning our salvation through human effort, works, and good deeds). Knowing that it’s only Christ that saves us from hell frees us from the fear of God’s wrath and also frees us from legalism (our attempt to gain God’s favor and grace through good deeds and works). We don’t have to live in the bondage that legalism brings to us by creating a law system that condemns us but one that cannot deliver us. We can by faith alone trust in the saving sacrifice of Christ’s death and be free from striving to earn our salvation, be free from the fear of God’s rejection and condemnation, and be free to experience God’s unconditional love and unchanging grace.

Those who actually believe that a believer can be removed from the position of God’s grace through Christ must remember that Jesus Christ paid the necessary sin debt in full when He died upon the cross to free us forever from God’s wrath.

The liberty that we possess in Christ is to know that we have been released from the awful debt of sin and judgment that we acquired before God and that we will never again be condemned for our sins. This is true freedom, and liberty. When we know this and believe it, we will be released from the fear of condemnation before God and bask in the sunshine of God's freedom from guilt and judgment for our sins.

John 3:18

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Read it and believe it – “Not condemned!” Our simple faith in Christ keeps us from God's wrath. If we truly believe this promise we will be free from the fear of God's wrath and punishment and bask in the sunshine of His love and acceptance, and grace.

John 5:24

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not (at any time in the future) come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

Notice something:

❖ We must hear the truth – “heareth my word”

Without believing the record of truth that Jesus gave regarding salvation and eternal life, we cannot be saved. We need to give something that people can believe and what they need to give them is the Gospel truth.

❖ We must believe the truth – “believeth on him that sent me”

Jesus said that a person must believe on “him that sent me” (believe on the Father). The thought here is that one must believe that the Father sent Jesus Christ into the world. What must he believe? He must believe that the Father sent the Lord Jesus to be our Savior. We must believe what the Father says about the Lord Jesus is absolutely true, that He is the only Savior that can take away our sins and judgment.

In short, we must hear the truth that Jesus told us and also believe that the Father backs up the same message that the Son has shared regarding salvation and eternal life.

What is the truth that we must believe?

- ✓ The present possession of eternal life – “hath everlasting life”

Notice that Jesus says the person “hath everlasting life.” He did not say that the believer will in the future have eternal life, but that he has it right now!

- ✓ The future freedom from wrath – “shall not come into condemnation”

Jesus is covering both the present and future by now stating that we “shall not come into condemnation.” The thought here is that the believer is not condemned now and will never be condemned in the future. The one who believes on the Lord Jesus is free from judgment because Christ has paid the penalty for his sins on Calvary. God will not demand the payment of this penalty twice. Christ has paid it as our Substitute, and that is sufficient.

- ✓ The glorious transaction to spiritual life – “passed from death unto life”

Finally, Jesus states that we have “passed from death unto life.” This speaks of a spiritual transaction. It means that at the moment we possess faith in Christ for salvation, we no longer are spiritually dead in our sin and under the judgment of God but now possess spiritual life from above (a new birth) which is true both today, tomorrow and forever. Do you want assurance? Do you want to be free from the fear of God’s wrath and judgment? Then believe what God tells you! When you believe on Christ, you will

Romans 5:9

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

- The present standing of justification – “being now justified by his blood”

This is our legal and judicial standing before God’s throne and presence. God’s declares us “not guilty” in His presence.

- The future safety from Gods’ wrath

Because of our legal standing of justification before God, the Bible teaches that we “shall be saved from wrath” which again is a statement of future assurance. In other words, we shall not at any time in the future be condemned in our sins by God. There is no future condemnation for the believer – none! This means that God’s saints will NEVER be condemned to hell (“no condemnation” or adverse sentence or verdict of judgment against us - Rom. 8:1). Believe it and be free! Be free from the fear of God’s wrath and condemnation. Live without possessing the fear of God’s judgment.

b. Legalism is the error that destroys the sufficiency of Christ’s death.

The words that Christ’s death “shall profit you nothing” (vs. 2) and that His death will be of “no effect” (vs. 4) indicates that legalism (a works-salvation) robs Christ’s death of its saving value and significance. If Christ cannot save you in the end, without works, then His death is absolutely meaningless. The purpose of His death to give you freedom from God’s wrath is nothing more than a hoax.

Furthermore, if we must become indebted to observing the Mosaic Law for salvation (“a debtor to do the whole law” – vs. 3) this also discredits Christ’s sacrifice and makes it meaningless, insignificant, and of no saving value to us. If you must be saved by legalism (human effort and works) then Christ’s death becomes useless to you. It has no real value.

Jesus did not die to help you get to Heaven; He died to save you and take you to Heaven! Think of it this way; Jesus died to save you, but if He can’t save you in the end, then His death is absolutely worthless and of no value and significance to you. If Jesus cannot save you in the end, then why did He die to become your Savior? Christ’s death is meaningless and of no value if you can somehow earn your salvation and merit God’s favor or grace.

Jesus did not die to help us get to Heaven after we do our part. Jesus paid it all! What value can Christ have to you if you really believe that something other than Christ can save you? This is a mockery of Christ’s death. Legalism makes the death of Christ of no value! Christ’s died to save us by His grace, but if we reject this truth, then His death has no value to us.

Galatians 2:21

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

The words “frustrate” means to “set aside” and replace the grace of God for legalism (law and human effort). Legalism takes the purpose and meaning out of Christ’s death. It sets aside grace and makes the death of Christ absolutely meaningless. If we cannot be saved by God’s grace, through Jesus Christ, then why did Christ die on the cross?

Legalism is spitting in the face of Jesus and said, “I need something else other than what You did for me on the cross.” Legalism looks at Jesus on the cross and says: Sorry, Jesus, Your pain, agony, death, shedding of your blood and separation from the Father are not enough to save me. I also need to do something! Can you honestly look at Jesus and tell Him this?

Matthew 26:67 records:

Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands

Matthew 27:30

And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

When we trust in something other than Christ to save us, we spit on Christ! We spit in the face of Jesus, the very One who died in our place to pay sin’s penalty in full and the only One that can save us.

Paul is saying in Galatians 5:2 that Christ will be of no profit (advantage) to you, if you don’t trust in Him alone to save you. In other words, you cannot gain anything from Him if you really don’t believe He can save you from condemnation and judgment forever. You must have confidence in Christ in order to gain everything from Him. You must believe that He alone can save you.

II. Stay Free

In Galatians 5:1 Paul warns: “and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” What he is saying to each Christian is this – stay free! Don’t become ensnared to trapped in the error of legalism (that you must do something to earn and merit your salvation).

Paul warns us that we can lose our freedom or liberty which is knowing that Christ's death is able to save us from God's wrath and condemnation forever, that grace alone saves us, and that we no longer must live under legalism (seeking to earn or merit our salvation through human effort, works, and good deeds).

Unless we are Biblical in our understanding, we can't remain free! We can't rest in Christ's death to free us from the fear of condemnation forever and be enslaved to legalism (attempting to earn our merit our salvation and justification before God). Freedom or liberty in relation to our salvation means we are free from the fear of God's wrath and judgment, free from legalism (the attempt to earn God's favor) and free to experience God's unconditional love and acceptance which is based upon His free grace.

One inmate said, "All I want is to be free again!" Yes, freedom is a wonderful thing! Living free in a country is joyous. But even more joyous than this is living free from legalism (human effort) and the condemnation that this brings into our hearts and lives.

To become "entangled again in the yoke of bondage" means we should not move back under the Law (legalism) as the way or means of salvation. If we do, we will move back under a system that brings fear into our hearts, which provides us no mercy, and which can only condemn us before God. In short, we will lose our freedom or liberty.

The Bible says we lose this freedom (the liberty knowing that we are saved from God's wrath forever) when we "fall from grace" which means we "fall" (drop away or abandon) from the teaching that only the death of Jesus Christ can save us (Eph. 2:8-9). Once again, falling from grace means that we move away from the teaching that salvation is by grace alone without legalism (works). It speaks of a Christian abandoning the value and sufficiency of Christ's death on his behalf.

God wants us to only trust in the saving merits of the death of His Son to secure our salvation forever. When we do, we will be free from the fear of God's condemnation and wrath forever (John 3:18; 5:24).

I'm free from the fear of tomorrow,
I'm free from the guilt of the past

For I've traded all my shackles
For a glorious song.
I'm free, praise the Lord, free at last!"

James 1:14-15

"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Some claim by this verse that that if one is overtaken by a specific sin that they lose their salvation and become lost. The mention of sin bringing forth death is used to prove that a Christian lose his or her salvation when they follow the devil's temptation. However, James is simply revealing the original result of sin that all humans share.

It is the sin God warned Adam about that would bring death, not immediately, but in the course of time (Gen. 2:17). James is simply stating that the inevitable result of all sin is death.

James has the original sin of Genesis in mind. He is teaching us once again about the universal principle established in Genesis that our sin will in time bring about physical death to our lives. James has been painting a picture of the entire history of sin from its conception in our hearts and lives to the inevitable result of all sin which is physical death. This is why he speaks of sin bringing forth death.

The normal and ultimate course of sin is illustrated by the account in the Garden of Eden. James wants to remind us that when sin is birthed in our lives, as it was birthed in the Garden of Eden, it ultimately brings forth death as God has originally warned. Although the death sentence is already upon us through our link with Adam (Romans 5:12), James reminds us of the death sentence to remind us of the serious nature of sin. We should take sin and temptation seriously because of the profound impact it has upon our life both today and in the future. Thank God that we have been given victory over temptation and sin and ultimately victory over death through the resurrection.

The emphasis on physical death is also seen in some Old Testament references which are often quotes as texts which are supposed to strike fear

in the hearts of Christians, reminding them that they can commit a sin, die in their sin, and go to hell.

Ezekiel 18:4

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Ezekiel 18:20

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.”

This death statement was made under the Mosaic Law which required physical death for certain specified sins that an individual person commits. Ezekiel’s point is that each individual will be judged by their own sins, not the sins that their fathers have done. This gives each one of us personal responsibility and accountability before God. We can’t blame our parents or anyone else for our sour grapes (Ezek. 1:2) or sins.

Ezekiel informs us that under the Mosaic Law certain sins required the death penalty. However, the teaching in verses 5-24 is not dealing with losing spiritual and eternal life. It is specifying the ending of physical life or physical death in view of a person’s sins. The punishment described here is temporal – not eternal. The judgment was physical death (cf. vv. 4, 20, 26), not eternal damnation.

If every sin we commit results in the loss of our soul, then Jesus made a sad mistake when He bore the penalty for our sins on the cross and was judged in our place! Jesus did not die on the cross so we can die in our sins and go to hell. He died on the cross so we might never die in our sins and experience spiritual death and separation from God (Romans 6:23).

Ezekiel 18:20 says: “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

Sadly, many will teach that this means spiritual death results when we commit a sin in our Christian life. Think of the ramifications of this false and bizarre theology. People will tell you that when a Christian sins this means

sure damnation and unless one confesses his sin he will end up in hell. This kind of thinking is what the Bible calls vain reasoning; it's not Biblical truth.

The idea that we must confess all of our sins in order to be resaved over and over again (untold thousands of times in our lifetime) in order to escape spiritual death is erroneous. If this were true, then Jesus would have to die thousands of times on the cross for each person's sins and this would be repeated billions of times in connection with the lives of all people who need to confess their sins for salvation. Of course, this could never happen, since there is only one sacrifice for sin that grants total forgiveness for all sins and frees us from judgment forever (Heb. 10:14).

Eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9; John 3:16) is ours by virtue of a one-time expression of faith (Rom. 4:5; John 6:47), in a one-time sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:12, 14) that is non-repeatable, which results in a one-time transferal of God's unmerited free grace (Rom. 3:24) into our lives, granting us a one-time justified standing before God (Gal. 2:16; Rom. 8:30). Salvational faith, Christ's sacrifice, the transferring of grace to our lives, which results in justification are all viewed as non-repeatable events that take place one time in relation to a person's salvation. They are not redone over and over again.

This means we don't confess our sins over and over again to regain our salvation. Why? It's because Jesus died once to save us forever (Heb. 7:25). Therefore, His grace and salvation are not reapplied to us over and over again based upon our confession. Grace is applied to our life through faith alone in Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9) and only ONE time in response to a believer's total faith in the finished work of Christ (John 19:30). We have a standing of acceptance before God in Christ that is based upon grace (God's unmerited and undeserved favor – Romans 5:1-2) which is received only once in life through our one-time expression of faith in Christ (Acts 16:31; Gal. 3:26).

Jesus did not set up a confessional booth for the Church that helps us secure His grace over and over again every time we sin, so we don't die the sinner's death (Ezek. 18:20). We don't confess to get saved over and over again, since Jesus died on the cross to save us forever, through His one-time, sufficient sacrifice. If you think for one moment that you can lose your salvation and get it back again, through confession, you are claiming that Christ's death is only good enough to save you if you confess your sins and

reapply His death and salvation to your life thousands of times throughout your lifetime.

Confession has nothing to do with salvation before God (1 John 1:9) but restoration of fellowship with God. Salvation is not redone after one confesses their sins in hope that they won't sin again until they die, so they might be in a good state of acceptance before God at the time of their death. This sounds more like Roman Catholic Theology than evangelical and Biblical Theology.

James 5:9

“Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.”

Some suggest that being condemned is losing one's salvation and opening ourselves up to experiencing God's judgment and wrath after we die. But once again this is assuming something that the Bible does not teach. The Bible says that a believer in Jesus Christ cannot fall into condemnation or the judgment of God in relation to hell or God's wrath and face spiritual death (John 3:18, 36). We either believe what Jesus says or make Him out to be a liar. Freedom from God's wrath is based upon our belief in Christ – not the condition of our Christian life.

The word for “condemned” (krino) in James 5:9 means to be sentenced and punished in some manner and experience God's disfavor in connection with our lives. It's actually God's decree and sentence upon one's life. Of course, God's children can NEVER be condemned in their sins (John 3:18) since Jesus was already condemned for them in their place (“Christ died for our sins” - 1 Cor. 15:3-4). This means they will never experience hell and suffer God's wrath for their sins. However, a Christian can be condemned at the Judgment Seat of Christ for his wayward living and find himself disapproved by God and His standard of righteous living. A believer can be condemned and at fault for his lack of spiritual living without being condemned to hell for his sins. James clearly reveals this to us. However, God passes judgment on a Christian in a different way than He passes judgment on unsaved people.

The condemnation that Christians experience for sin and fleshly living at the Judgment Seat of Christ is not God's wrath in hell and separation from Him

through a loss of salvation. The condemnation that we face in this coming day is God's righteous verdict or sentence regarding our faithfulness in living the Christian life. God is always right! He is never wrong. The outcome or result of this condemning sentence at the Judgment Seat of Christ will be believer's sensing guilt (conviction), knowing Christ's displeasure with their life, His disfavor, and ultimately experiencing the loss of reward. This is the condemnation that Christians face. It is God's verdict or decree regarding how we have lived the Christian life and the effects or results that come from this verdict. Remember that we can never turn back the clock!

“Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life's busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in 'that day' my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgement seat;
Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last.

Only one life twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. So give to Jesus every day, it's the only life that pays, when you recall, you have but one life!

What then is the purpose for the condemnation that James says we can face in the Christian life? James 5:9 declares that we can be condemned or experience God's verdict and sentence regarding the life that we lived as a Christian and we will also experience His displeasure, disfavor, conviction, and loss of reward for holding grudges and speaking evil things about others. Gossip will not be left undone at the Judgment Seat of Christ!

The condemnation in James 5:9 has to do with being condemned (falling under God's verdict or sentence of judgment and disfavor) as it relates to our Christian life – not as it relates to our lost estate (hell, damnation, and God's wrath). A Christian can fall under the Lord's condemnation in the coming examination at the Judgment Seat of Christ which is essentially His righteous

verdict of his faithful or unfaithful living. This simply means that Jesus will not approve of our lifestyle, decisions, or actions and this will bring conviction, shame, and regret into our lives. We will pass through His judgment and sense that we have failed and lost a measure of reward we could have otherwise gained.

Once again, James 5:9 does not mean that a Christian will be condemned in relation to his salvation and eternal soul. What it means is that he will experience God's judgment and disfavor in relation to his sinful lifestyle and this will be evidenced at the Bema Seat of Christ in shame and loss of reward (2 Cor. 5:10). The Judgment Seat of Christ is not a courtroom where we face judgment for our sins in order to determine our eternal destiny. It is a courtroom where we will face judgment for how we have served and lived for Jesus Christ which will determine our eternal reward (1 Cor. 3:14; 2 Cor. 5:10). The result of this verdict or sentence of judgment will involve shame, regret, and loss of reward (1 Cor. 3:15; 2 John 8).

James 5:12 gives another reason for Christian condemnation:

“But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.”

Again, there are those who teach that falling into condemnation means to experience God's wrath and judgment in hell when sin overtakes our lives. Can you even imagine how often a person would lose his salvation if this were really true? If we would lose our salvation for committing sin then we would be in constant danger of being lost and condemned to die the sinner's death. This takes the whole purpose out of Christ's death who died and was condemned in our place (1 Pet. 3:18).

The word translated as “condemnation” in this text is a different Greek word (hupokrisis) which means dissimulation and hypocrisy, acting under deceit. This is why we need to sometimes look at the Greek vocabulary. We must remember that the translators were not inspired in bringing the vocabulary over from the Greek language; the Word of God is inspired.

In this case, falling into condemnation would speak of falling into a state of hypocrisy. This happens when we use improper speech or language and find

our Christian testimony being questioned by others. In short, it's hypocritical to say that you are a Christian and talk like a non-Christian.

In James 5:12 the Bible says we can also be found as a hypocrite in relation to our Christian life when we speak like unsaved people. This is talking about the thoughtless use of the Lord's Name or some other name to attest or confirm the truthfulness of one's speech or what we are saying. Apparently it was true in the day of James and is still true today that unsaved people have the practice of swearing in various ways, whether it's by choice of words or invoking an oath of some kind, to confirm that they are true to their word.

The point is this; the Christian should not have to swear by anyone or anything, whether it is something connected with heaven or on earth. Those who know him should be able to depend on the fact that his "Yes" means "Yes" and his "No" means "No." Swearing on a stack of Bibles is erroneous. That's using the Bible in a vain and derogatory manner. Using another name to confirm our trustworthiness is wrong.

Of course, this passage could also be applied to forbid those needless expressions that we can use such as "For heaven's sake," "As God is my Judge," "By Jove" and other words designed to replace Jesus' name such as "gee", "gosh" and "golly" or "goodness" (slang words for God). James may actually be thinking of the third commandment found in Exodus 20:7, "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

The Christian stands as a hypocrite when he or she uses filler words (words that take the place of swear words) or when a Christian must use any words to confirm his own trustworthiness. Our plain speech of "yes" and "no" should be good enough to declare our truthfulness. We don't have to invoke any filler words to prove we are Christian. We are to prove it by our truthfulness in living.

James 5:19-20

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

This section of Scripture is often misunderstood and taught to mean by conditional salvationists that one of God's people can lose their salvation and be converted or resaved again with the help of another person. It's believed that His resalvation or reconversion will save his soul from hell. Once again, this is an absurd interpretation of this section of Scripture. God's Word teaches nowhere that a person can lose his salvation.

There are several observations and conclusions from this passage of Scripture. First, the sinner here is a brother in Christ. The text says, "if any of you do err from the truth." This is a clear indication that this is a person who is a brother in Christ. Elsewhere the same indication is given regarding this individual ("among you" – vv. 13-14). This means that he still is a brother, part of the body of Christ, even though he has sinned. Yes, we can sin and still be saved in spite of the faulty and rather absurd theology of conditional salvationists. Imagine how many times we would lose our salvation if our salvation was conditioned upon living a perfect life.

Second, the conversion of this individual ("he which converteth the sinner") has to do with converting a Christian who has fallen into sin by reversing the direction of his life. The idea of the word conversion means to revert back or turnabout. In this case, conversion is not reversing one's salvation but reversing one's course of direction in relation to their Christian life. This person needs to turnabout or reverse themselves from their sinful error and return to the righteous way or path that God intends for them to walk. They also need to return to fellowship with God and with their brother and sisters once again. This text is talking about Christian conversion!

Wandering Christians need to be brought back to the fold. James is not talking about evangelism of the lost but restoration or the saved. He is talking about revival - not redemption.

In our zeal to evangelize the lost, perhaps we sometimes do not give sufficient attention to those sheep of Christ who have wandered from the fold. We need this type of ministry today. Christians need one another (Gal. 6:1-2). Unsaved people need to be saved from hell but Christians sometimes need to be saved from their sinful errors and ways.

Third, in saving a Christian from death, through our Biblical guidance and counsel, we do not save the individual person ("soul") from hell. Death in this context does not refer to spiritual death or hell but to physical death as a

result of God's chastening hand upon one's life. This is an example of a sin that can lead to physical death.

1 John 5:16

"If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it."

This also is a verse that is often used to promote the loss of one's salvation. However, this is not a reference to spiritual death in hell but to physical death at it pertains to this life. John is telling us there is a type of sin that is not punishable by physical death through God's chastening hand. In this case, a Christian can pray in CONFIDENCE for this sinful believer's restoration to God and His people, who has not sinned a sin that would lead to a fatal death, understanding that God will NOT take this person's life ("he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death").

However, when a brother commits a sin in relation to his Christian life that can possibly result in his premature death by God's chastening hand, then we are instructed to pray by submitting the matter to the will of God and not necessarily expect his restoration to God and the church family ("I do not say that he shall pray for it" – meaning the brother's restoration to God and the church family). Of course, John is not saying that we should not pray for this individual but at the same time we must turn them over to the will of God and the justice of God (1 Tim. 1:20).

God can prematurely take the life of some of His children because of their sin. This is the case in James 5:20. A sin that results in God bringing physical death upon a Christian is not just any type of sin. It's a sin that is worthy of church discipline, as is the case in James. It's also a sin that a brother or sister continues to openly endorse and live in without repentance and turning back to God and His fellowship.

Open and rebellious sins such as living in adultery and other sexual sins (homosexuality, lesbianism), sins of drug addiction and alcoholism, may be some of the types of sins which are worthy of God's death penalty. Only God ultimately knows. However, these are sins which bring great reproach upon the body of Christ and sins that call for church discipline.

This is the case in James chapter 5. A sinning Christian had become spiritually weak, spiritually feeble and in great spiritual need due to his sin. I believe this person was inflicted with the sin malady which brings its own spiritual and physical ramifications to a person's psychological and physiological health. The elders are seen coming to restore him and getting a true confession from him in order to save him from God's death penalty (James 5:15-16).

Fourth, in converting a brother from the error of his way (James 5:20), through our Biblical counsel and advice, we will also cover many sins ("shall hide a multitude of sins"). The word "cover" is a beautiful Old Testament expression for forgiveness (Ps. 32:1). This simply means that when the brother comes back into a place of right fellowship with God and the church his sins are forgiven by God and the local church and these sins are to be remembered no more.

True love does not exploit the sin of others through gossip, failing to forgive another person for their sin, or remembering their sins (1 Peter 4:8). Christians should be in the practice of covering sins, not gossiping about sins.

1 Corinthians 8:11

"And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?"

This verse is also misunderstood by conditional salvationists. It's believed that a brother can perish and go to hell as a result of stumbling in his Christian life. It is claimed that Christ died to save this person but that he cannot remain saved if he allows himself to stumble. Thank God this is not true (John 3:16). The passage before us is set in the context of expressing Christian liberty in front of someone who has not realized his freedom under grace. In this case, the person has convictions about eating meat that had been offered to pagan idols.

Paul is teaching that we should learn to limit our liberty in front of others if it is going to bring back bad memories from their past unsaved life and cause them to stumble. Those who were involved in pagan ceremonies and services where meat was offered to idols found eating the type of meat as something which was deeply offensive to them. It might bring back memories

of the past and cause them to become caught up and trapped once again in their old lifestyle of sin.

1. Don't pressure the saints – 1 Cor. 8:10
2. Don't hurt the saints – 1 Cor. 8:11
3. Don't sin against the saints – 1 Cor. 8:12
4. Don't offend the saints – 1 Cor. 8:13

The word “perish” (1 Cor. 8:11) does not mean that this child of God would lose his eternal salvation. It means NOT the loss of *being* but the loss of *well-being*. In other words, this weaker brother's life could be adversely affected and his spiritual growth could be hindered by our open actions. Our open actions might cause him to revert back to some of his old ways. They will certainly “wound their weak conscience” (1 Cor. 8:12). A weak conscience is a conscience that is not Biblically taught and informed about liberty and grace. It's a conscience that can be easily “wounded” or violated when a person is coerced to participate with certain actions which they cannot honestly condone and permit in their own life.

The tremendous seriousness of offending a weaker brother in Christ is indicated by the words “for whom Christ died” (1 Cor. 8:11). Paul's argument is that if the Lord Jesus Christ loved this man so much that He was willing to die for him, we should not dare to hinder his spiritual progress by doing anything that would cause a brother to stumble. A few slices of meat are not worth it!

There are many things that people want to push on the church today which are simply not worth promoting and parading before others. They have their ideas, their stubborn streaks, and own personal agenda. Why are we so selfish sometimes? We ought to think of others instead of ourselves. We need to stop pushing our liberty down the throat of others.

Romans 6:15-16

“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

Romans 6:15 tells us that the very purpose of God's grace is to free man from sin. How, then, could grace possibly justify continuing in sin? Grace

not only justifies but also transforms the life that is saved. A life that gives no evidence of moral and spiritual transformation gives no evidence of grace and salvation.

Romans 6:16 is set in the context of our past sinful lives, when we were bound to sin. Our past life is then contrasted to our present lives as Christians which through God's liberating grace we are no longer bound to sin but to righteous and holy living (Rom. 6:17-20).

The "death" Paul is alluding to in this verse (Rom. 6:15) and other verses to follow (Rom. 6:21, 23) is spiritual death or separation from God. However, Paul is not teaching that a Christian is in danger of losing his salvation and facing spiritual death. Instead, he is reminding believers that they should not allow sin to overcome them, since this was the pattern of their old life, when they were under sin's bondage and going down the broad road that leads to hell.

Because of God's transforming grace, we no longer must live in the past but live for Jesus Christ in the present.

Conditional Salvationists have also used Romans chapter 11 to allegedly prove that a believer can lose his or her salvation.

Romans 11:15-23 is a passage of great dispensational significance – not a passage of conditional salvation. It's not a passage deigned to threaten the true believer in Christ but help them keep their Gentile blessing of salvation in proper perspective. This passage keeps the word "amazing" in front of the word "grace." It is a matter of "amazing grace" that we are blessed as Gentiles who were not part of God's original salvation blessing. God has chosen to bring the Gentiles into the great spiritual favor and blessing today while temporarily setting aside the Jews from the place of prominent blessing (Matt. 21:43). However, God promises to once again graft the Jewish people, as a nation, into a prominent place of blessing in the future (Rom. 11:26).

The whole teaching of this passage reveals that unbelieving Israel, who rejected the Messiah, was temporarily cut off from the place of blessing, while believing Gentiles were brought into the place of blessing in the present Church Age. These verses have nothing to do with the loss of a person's salvation but are dealing with those who choose to believe and those who

chose to not believe and be saved. They are teaching great national and dispensational truth – not the personal loss of salvation as some suggest.

Romans 11:15-17 declares:

“For if the casting away of them (the Jewish nation for their unbelief and unrepentance were temporarily set aside from the place of God’s full blessing and favor – Matt. 21:43) *be* the reconciling of the world (Israel’s rejection of Christ resulted in Christ paying a price for sin and making it possible for all mankind to be saved – Romans 11:11-12), what *shall* the receiving of *them be*, but life from the dead (the Second Coming and Israel’s glorious salvation, when large numbers of Jews receive Christ as their Messiah and Savior, and Israel becomes a saved nation – Romans 11:25-26)?

“For (the reason is stated why Israel will be saved and brought back into the place of blessing in the future, mainly, Israel was originally set apart by God to receive His special privileges and promises) if the firstfruit (of dough – Numb. 15:19-21) *be* holy (not necessarily a moral quality but a reference to Abraham who was first called and set apart by God with special privileges and possessed a special nearness to God – Gen. 12:1-3), the lump *is* also *holy*: (the decedents of Abraham, the Jews as a national people, who are in the line of special privilege, are also uniquely set apart by God with covenant promises – “Israel my glory” that is “graven upon the palms of my hands” - Isa. 46:13; with 49:15-16) and if the root *be* holy (Abraham who is set apart by God with unique privileges), so *are* the branches (the Jewish race who was set apart, privileged, and in the line of God’s true temporal blessings – Exodus 19:5-6).

“And if some of the branches be broken off (unbelieving and unrepentant Israel being taken away from the place of national blessing and privilege – the dead Jewish branches are discarded – Matt. 23:38-39), and thou (the believing Gentiles), being a wild olive tree (a non-domestic or wild olive shoot or branch), wert grafted in among them and with them (the believing Jews = this is speaking of the believing Jews of Romans 2:28-29 and believing Gentiles being joined together in the Church – 1 Cor. 12:13), partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree (Abraham’s covenant promise of salvation through Christ - we are indebted to Israel, not Israel to us, since “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22 with Rom. 11:11-12 & 20).

Romans 11:20 goes on to say:

Well; because of unbelief they (unbelieving Israel as a nation – John 1:11) were broken off (unbelieving Israel was taken out of the place of favor and blessing as a nation), and thou standest by faith (Gentile salvation came through faith in Christ - not because of anything good they had done!). Be not highminded (don't be prideful in any way), but fear (this is not the fear of losing one's salvation but the Biblical reverential fear for God that stems from properly understanding His amazing grace and salvation – Heb. 12:28):

Romans 11:21-22 not give a warning:

“For (the reason for reverential fear of God's ways and purposes) if God spared not the natural branches (the nation of Israel, who was originally in the place of special favor and national blessing, was removed from this place of blessing because of her unbelief), *take heed* lest he also spare not thee (this is not a warning against losing individual salvation which we already possess but a warning of judgment given to those Gentiles who do not possess salvation through the Gospel – like unbelieving Israel – Heb. 9:27).

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God (God expressed both kindness and wrath on two different groups of people): on them which fell (a reference to the unbelieving Jews), severity (God's wrath and judgment was expressed toward Israel because the Jews were cut off from the place of original blessing for rejecting the Messiah); but toward thee (believing Gentiles), goodness (kindness and grace was expressed to the Gentiles), if thou continue in *his* goodness: (the proof of salvation – 1 Cor. 15:2; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:6, 14) otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (God will deal severely with those unbelieving Gentiles who reject Him and the way of salvation – John 3:36).

Romans chapter 11 is teaching that we should not look down upon the Jews for rejecting the Messiah for their rejection resulted in our salvation. Yes, they failed God, but we were no better (Romans 3:9). We were a bunch of dumb Gentiles going to hell. It's only by God's grace that we have been grafted into the place of blessing and special favor!

As we have seen, this section of the Word of God has nothing to do with a person losing his salvation. Misinformed conditional salvationists will use a section of verses such as this, which are teaching great dispensational truths, and try and apply these verses to their own personal life and fear for

their soul, if they get out of line. This kind of false interpretation highjacks the true meaning of the Bible and demonstrates a person's ignorance regarding what the Bible teaches.

The "breaking off of the branches" is the equivalent to "the fall" (Rom. 11:11), "the diminishing" (Rom. 11:12), and "the casting away" (Rom. 11:15) of Israel as a nation who rejected Messiah as Savior (John 1:11). These verses have nothing to do with a person receiving Christ and then losing the salvation they already possess. To read into this passage conditional salvation based upon works is to abuse the teaching and truth Paul was seeking to communicate.

Some conditional salvationists also claim that the unpardonable sin is another strong confirmation that a believer can lose his or her salvation. However, this is vain reasoning – not Scriptural reasoning. Can blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the unpardonable sin, be committed today?

Matthew 12:24

"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

The unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit was to conclude that Jesus was performing His miracles, such as casting out demons, by the power Satan instead of the power of the Holy Spirit. It was an unforgivable sin to claim that Jesus was performing all of His miracles by Satan's assistance instead of the Spirit's power. This was blaspheming the Holy Spirit and His work.

Jesus then taught in Matthew 12:31-32:

"Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

a. This sin cannot be committed today.

The reason this specific sin CANNOT be committed today is because Jesus is no longer here in the flesh performing miracles as He did during His earthly

ministry. *Therefore, this specific sin cannot be reproduced today, for it required Jesus' presence on earth with His performing miracles through the Spirit's power.* It would be IMPOSSIBLE to commit this sin today since Jesus is not here on the earth. A person cannot blaspheme the Spirit in the same sense in which Jesus' contemporaries could. In order to do so a person would have to literally observe Jesus doing His works while He was on earth and then attribute these works to Satan instead of the Holy Spirit.

b. This sin can only be committed by unsaved people.

These people are not saved people losing their salvation but unsaved people never possessing salvation! The reason this sin cannot be forgiven is because of the condition of the people's hearts who committed this sin. The hearts of the unsaved Pharisees were so calloused and hardened in their sinful rejection of Christ and His ways that they would not repent and be saved (John 5:40). Therefore, there is no hope for them to be forgiven. Their fate and doom is forever sealed by their willful rejection of the Son of God's offer of salvation.

Matthew 11:18-19

"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Jesus then concludes in Matthew 11:22:

"But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you."

The people, who committed this terrible sin, connecting Christ's miracles to the power to Satan, while He was performing miracles before their very eyes, could never be forgiven of this wicked and deplorable sin. Why? It's because they were "past feeling" (Eph. 4:19) and "God gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Rom. 1:28) sealing their fate.

This is what Jesus is getting at when speaking of their future judgment. Their doom was sealed because of the hardness of their hearts and unsaved condition. These religious people who committed the unpardonable sin during Christ's day were not saved and then lost; they were NEVER saved.

This particular sin demonstrated an absolute and permanent refusal of these religious people to believe that Jesus was the Messiah and Savior, which resulted in loss of opportunity to ever be forgiven. As a result, they were confirmed in their unbelief (2 Thess. 2:10-11). There is an old saying that goes like this:

“There is a time, we know not when;
There is a place, we know not where,
That seals the destiny of men
For glory or despair.”

Some also erroneously suggest that since the Bible exhorts believers to remain faithful that this proves a Christian can be lost.

1. Be steadfast and unmoveable - 1 Corinthians 15:58
2. We will reap if we do not grow weary - Galatians 6:9
3. Be faithful unto death and I will give crown of life - Revelation 2:10
4. Practice these things and God will be with you - Philippians 4:9

Again, to claim that faithfulness is part of maintaining one's salvation is simply reading one's biased theology into these verses that deal with commitment to the Lord. In none of these verses, as they relate to the Christian life, is God threatening Christians. Instead of threatening Christians, God is encouraging His people to remain faithful in order to receive His wonderful blessings related to the Christian life and reward in the next life. Those who have theological “tunnel vision” regarding conditional salvation always see God threatening His people instead of encouraging them.

I've got news for you; God is not out to “get us” but help us live for His glory through the power of the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 3:18).

II. Give proof that people NEVER were saved - not that they lost their salvation.

We now return to our initial outline. Some of the previous verses that dealt with the confirmation of a person's salvation could be included in this point as well. In some measure they overlap with our first point. This is because

the same verses that give the confirmation or proof of a person's salvation are sometimes contrasted with people who were never saved. A person's lack of fruitful living and apostasy always confirms that they were NEVER saved since no person can be saved and then lost.

Three Explanations of Texts that are Used to Discredit Eternal Security ...
Give proof that people <u>ARE</u> saved (not the way of their salvation)
Give proof that people <u>NEVER</u> were saved (not that they lost their salvation)
Give proof that people <u>CANNOT</u> lose their salvation (since Christ died only once to save them).

A chart helps us to understand how we should understand the verses that are used to discredit the Biblical teaching of eternal security. There are many apostasy verses that are wrongly interpreted to promote the "loss of salvation" theory. Verses that speak of apostasy reference people who were NEVER saved but these verses are twisted and turned around to teach someone who was saved and then lose because of apostasy.

An apostate is someone who often claims to be saved and a follower of Christ but at the same time departs from the truth. This is evident since the apostate teaches others errant doctrines and philosophies which run contrary to truth and which keep people from coming to repentance and faith in Christ. The teachings of apostasy and lifestyle of apostates are often addressed throughout the Bible. Peter and Jude give much attention to apostate and apostates. The general truth about apostate teachers can be applied to those who claim to be saved but who do not live like they are saved.

There are two sides to apostasy: An apostate and imposter can possess similarity to Christianity but also diversity.

1. Similarity

Matthew 13:25

"But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way."

Jesus taught that there would be the mingling of the true and false together until the end of the age. The tares are not saved but they look like the wheat

(the true saints). Therefore, one way an apostate or unbeliever masks his apostasy is through deception.

Matthew 7:21-23 is another case in point:

“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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Some people think that their outward spiritual activity and actions will give them a ticket into the Kingdom and eternity with Christ. But they are dead wrong. The cloak of false spirituality and play acting does not save anyone. You can look good on the outside but be lost and going to hell. Don't be a fake!

Jesus said that a person must do “the will of my Father” (Matt. 7:21). This speaks of allowing God to genuinely rule in one's heart and life which becomes a living proof and validation of one's salvation. True Christians don't continue to play out the game of false spirituality; they live it out true spirituality and genuinely demonstrate by their attitudes and obedience that they are truly born again.

Here is the point. Some people look like a Christian, talk like a Christian, do things like a Christian, and profess to be a Christian, but they have never been born again (John 3:3). Eventually their true nature comes out. Either they will be exposed in this life or the next life.

Tares among the wheat and doing what appears to be spiritually good things, while being spiritually dirty on the inside and lost is a very real deception that is associated with the apostate or the one that has never embraced the truth. Deception is a very real part of the apostate and all apostasy.

2. Diversity

Jesus taught in Matthew 7:15-20:

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do

men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

Jesus is teaching us that apostates are the kind of people that can also show a very dark side. The “fruits” mentioned here is referencing corrupt works and teachings which are not according to the Bible. Apostates which are represented here as false prophets will eventually demonstrate their corrupt teachings and living. They won’t go unnoticed. Eventually they demonstrate their true nature. Jesus illustrates this by the tree and kind of fruit that it produces.

The life and teaching of those who claim to speak for God should be tested by the Word of God.

Isaiah 8:20

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is* no light in them.”

The apostate waters down the truth until, as C. H. Spurgeon said, “There is not enough left to make soup for a sick grasshopper.”

2 Peter 2:1

“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

False prophets and teachers are those who were never saved. They are not people who were born again and then unborn! How silly. The Bible always identifies apostates as unsaved, unredeemed, and unfit for Heaven (2 Peter 2:3). An apostate is not a saved person who becomes unsaved, he’s an unsaved person that NEVER becomes saved.

Peter goes on to say about these false prophets and teachers may appear to be religious, reformed and righteous but they end up going back to the

same lifestyle they always possessed and lived. Why? It's because they were never born again.

2 Peter 2:19-20

“While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”

2 Peter 2:19-22 gives the true nature and story regarding apostates and salvation. These people have rejected the clear revelation of the Gospel, salvation, and God's delivering power over sin. For these reasons they could NEVER be saved. Apostates cannot lose their salvation since they NEVER possessed salvation – “denying the Lord that bought them” (2 Pet. 2:1).

There are four things that apostates never possess.

1. They never possess true liberty.

This proves that apostates, the people represented in this chapter, were never saved.

2 Peter 2:19 addresses the converts of the apostates:

“While they (the apostates) promise them (their converts) liberty (a false type of liberty or freedom), they themselves (the apostate teachers) are the servants of corruption: for of whom (or by what or whatever) a man is overcome (a reference to the apostates themselves), of the same is he brought in bondage (to sin).”

False teachers with their outlandish messages of false liberty or freedom always seem able to attract a following. They always find converts (“many shall follow their pernicious ways” – 2 Peter 2:2). The “many” are the converts of the false teachers who blindly believe what they are teaching and also live lives of reckless abandonment. Sadly, the apostates often win converts to their cause and people follow their teachings and examples by developing a false view of liberty or freedom.

The apostates were telling others how they could experience liberty or freedom. But it evidently was a false type of liberty. The word “pernicious” (2 Pet. 2:2) means licentious and indicates that these false teachers were teaching antinomianism (no law) and libertinism (no moral restraints) instead of the true nature of freedom and liberty as taught in the Bible (1 Pet. 2:16).

2 Peter 2:10 also describes them in this way: “But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness.” These particular apostates lived a life of utter uncleanness and believed that they were living the liberated life that the New Testament promises to Christians. However, the liberty that the false teachers were peddling was not true freedom but a type of license to do whatever one pleases. It was the philosophy that says “live and let live” or “let me live the way that I want, with no strings attached, and I will finally be free.”

The whole liberty scam that is presented by these false teachers is a sad hoax. It’s the old “hippie philosophy” of false freedom and their abandonment to sin indicates they were never saved.

Someone advising another person to live free who is already bound to sin is like a 300-pound man trying to sell diet books. It’s an absurdity. One cannot truly be free unless they themselves are experience freedom from sin’s power. These apostates are examples of someone who does not possess true freedom in Christ and demonstrate by this fact that they never were saved.

2. They never possess true salvation.

Of course, this is another verification that the people mentioned in this chapter (apostates) could not lose their salvation. You can’t lose something you never possessed.

How can a person possess salvation when they reject the Gospel and personal claims about Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 2:1)? It’s impossible to be saved without embracing the Gospel of salvation (Rom. 1:16).

2 Peter 2:20 says:

“For if after they (the apostates themselves) have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they

are again entangled therein, and overcome (by their sin, lustful living, an reckless abandonment), the latter end is worse with them than the beginning” (because they will experience greater judgment in hell for knowing the truth but rejecting it – 2 Pet. 2:1).

What is Peter teaching in this verse? Apparently the apostate teachers at one time did make an alleged conversion to Christ. However, it was surely a false profession of faith in Christ since they ended up boldly denouncing the truth of the Gospel (2 Peter 2:1-2) and continued to live out a life of lust and wickedness before God (2 Peter 2:2, 10).

The terminology of “having escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 2:20) suggests these converts had experienced some type of reformation in relation to their personal lives. They actually *professed* (not possessed) salvation and that they knew Christ personally as Savior. They seemingly got started on the right track. Others were impressed with some of their new behavior patterns and lifestyle changes.

In spite of what is said about these apostates, it should be observed that this Bible passage uses no terminology affirming that these apostates were at one time true Christians. The terms such as “sons of God,” “children,” “born again,” “regenerate,” “redeemed” are never mentioned. Therefore, when the Bible says they have “escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (vs. 20) it does NOT suggest that the converts once possessed salvation and then lost it. It simply means that the false teachers had made some kind of profession of faith regarding salvation and passed through a superficial new experience in their life that was obviously short-lived.

The Bible states the apostates had “knowledge” (vs. 20) and that they knew the righteous way (“know” - vs. 21). However, we must remember that UNSAVED people can possess a superficial knowledge about Jesus Christ, the Gospel and His delivering power, but NEVER embrace its message and receive of the new life and delivering power that Christ wants to give to them.

These apostates possessed a head knowledge about Christ and the Gospel but not a heart knowledge of the truthfulness and reality of the delivering message of the Gospel. The facts demonstrate that the false teachers did

not embrace the truth that Jesus Christ offered to them (2 Pet. 2:1-2). We must remember that just because somebody has “knowledge” or knows the truth about Jesus Christ and His delivering power does not mean they possess true saving faith in Christ.

Titus 1:16

“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”

Remember that not all professors of salvation are possessors of salvation!

What kind of “knowledge” did these apostates have? What did they know? They knew about the Gospel, salvation through Jesus Christ and His delivering power over sin, but nothing in the text says they embraced Christ as Savior and received His delivering power over sin. Once again, knowing about something and receiving it are two different things (John 1:12). People might “know” what to do but then reject it and turn away from it (John 3:36).

3. They never possess true repentance.

Here is more proof that verifies that these apostate people were never saved.

2 Peter 2:22 says:

“But it is happened unto them (the false teachers or apostates) according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

When a person claims to be saved and goes back to living like they did before their alleged conversion, without any signs of new and regenerating life, it indicates that they NEVER truly repented over their sins and were saved (Luke 13:5). Like a dirty dog or pig (unclean animals from the perspective of Jewish law), they go back to their original state and live as they always lived, following the dictates of their sin nature.

Dogs and pigs follow their natural instincts and unchanged condition. In a similar way, unsaved and wicked people follow the dictates of their sinful and depraved natures. One can NEVER turn an unclean animal into a clean animal. This is impossible according to Jewish law and according to the nature of the animal kingdom. A dog or pig is always a dog or pig.

The apostates themselves claimed to have passed through a type of moral house cleaning (“having escaped the pollutions of the world” – vs. 20) which may at first seemed to be genuine and real. But in the end the true nature of the person comes out. It would be similar to trying to give a bath to a dog or pig and putting a blue ribbon on him for the county fair. The animal looks good for a certain period of time but eventually goes back to what it always truly was.

Peter first uses the illustration of a dog and pig to prove his point. A dog returns to his own vomit which is a practice that is disgusting and reflects the unchanged nature of the dog. The sow might be cleansed by external washing but it turns again to the mud. Furthermore, a pig returns to its mud hole and slop. The same is true regarding those who are apostates. They clean up but end up going back to the same disgusting practices and the same licentious living. It demonstrates that their nature was NEVER changed. In other words, they were NEVER saved and born again which means they did not receive the life-transforming power of Jesus Christ to deliver them from sin. This is why they go back to the same old vomit and pig pen way of life.

The point is rather obvious. A dog and pig do not change their true nature and neither does someone who follows apostasy and lives in open rebellion against God. Since these people do not possess a regenerating nature and new life in Christ, they go back to the same lifestyle they had always lived.

Jesus identifies this same type of person in Matthew 13:20-21:

“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”

In Matthew 13:22

“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

Similar to the apostates that Peter describes, all of the efforts of this person to improve his life ultimately results in nothing more than temporary and

superficial moral reform. This type of reformation that is represented in the religion of nominal Christianity, which is devoid of genuine faith and repentance. Today people try to conform to the way of Christianity through reformation and rituals but they lack true repentance and regeneration.

The apostate's nature was NEVER changed because they were NEVER born again. They NEVER possessed repentance and regeneration therefore they did not change *who* they were are and *how* they lived.

4. They never go to Heaven.

This gives to us a final confirmation that that the apostate people mentioned in this chapter and section of Scripture were never saved.

As we have seen, the apostate may at one time appear to be genuine, reformed, and possess a fiery zeal for the Lord (2 Pet. 2:20), but eventually their bubble pops and they go back to their old ways of living and reject the clear revelation that was given to them. The result of this departure or apostasy is now stated: "the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Pet. 2:20). This certainly means that the apostate does not enter Heaven upon his death. Just the opposite is true, "they bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet. 2:1) and "their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Pet. 2:3) because of their rejection of the Gospel light and the confirmation of their unregenerate lifestyle in sin. A person who has NEVER been saved cannot go to Heaven.

The solemn expression ("the latter end is worse with them than the beginning") means that after repeatedly rejecting the light of the revelation of the Gospel and deliverance from the power of sin, this person will receive greater damnation and judgment (Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24).

The Bible states the apostates had "knowledge" (vs. 20) and that they knew the righteous way ("know" - vs. 21). However, they rejected this light and therefore will be judged in a greater way for rejecting the light of revelation they possessed. Jesus repeatedly taught that greater judgment awaits those who reject the light of revelation (Matt. 10:14-15; 11:21-1-22). Paul taught the same truth (Romans 2:4-5).

2 Peter 2:21 explains this concept further:

“For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, (a designation for the body of truth for Christianity) than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment (the ethical teaching of Christian truth) delivered unto them.”

Once again, this means that those who have heard and understood the liberating message of the Gospel clearly, yet willfully reject it again and again, will be judged more harshly than those who have never heard or understood the message (Romans 2:12). The false teachers had heard the Gospel, knew the gospel, and could even speak the Gospel message, yet they never embraced its saving message and delivering power from sin.

1 John 2:19

“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”

John’s point is that the apostate was NEVER one of God’s children. He does not become a child and then lose his birthright. No, he never became a child of God (John 1:12).

Conclusion: Living a godly life is the PROOF of one’s salvation – not the WAY of salvation. On the other hand, living a consistently ungodly life without bearing fruit (transformation of living) does not result in the LOSS of one’s salvation; it becomes the PROOF that one never had regeneration or salvation. This is the case with the apostate.

Some conditional salvationists suggest that the apostates mentioned in 2 Peter were once saved and then lost because the Scripture says (according to their thinking) they have become accursed children (“cursed children” - 2 Pet. 2:14). The reasoning is that these people had to be previously saved since they are identified as God’s children – “cursed children.” However, this is vain reasoning because the Bible teaches that the devil has always had his own children and people who have repeatedly rejected the salvation through Jesus Christ (John 8:44) even as these false teachers did (2 Pet. 2:1). When a person denies Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to pay for

their redemption, it means that they are the devil's children – not God's children.

Hebrews 10:38-39

“Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back (shrink back), my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

This set of verses is sometimes used to promote that a Christian can lose his salvation. However, the very opposite truth is being presented here which is that a Christian cannot lose his salvation. There is a very clear contrast being made in these two verses between apostasy and Christians. Apostates are those who were NEVER saved while Christians are those who have believed on Christ and who did not abandon the cardinal teachings of Scripture and their faith in Christ for salvation. The words “draw back” or shrink back refers to apostasy and connotes departure from truth and faith in Christ.

When it says, “But we are not of them (the apostates) who draw back unto perdition” he is making a clear distinction between the apostate and true believers in Christ who will not abandon the basic teachings of Christianity and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ alone (“but of them that believe to the saving of the soul”). In other words, those who truly embrace Christ as Savior will not repudiate Jesus Christ and move away from the basic doctrines of Christianity. Remember that an apostate is someone who was NEVER saved while a Christian is one who is always believed and been saved. This is what the writer of Hebrews is teaching. Instead of the ruin which an apostate brings upon his rebellious life, the writer intended to be among those who believe and are saved.

Many take note that the Bible clearly prophesied some would fall away. It's assumed that those who fall away into total apostasy and abandonment of living were once saved but the lost their salvation.

Acts 20:28-30

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your

own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away (drag away) disciples after them.”

Conditional salvationist teach that believers are commissioned to “take heed” lest they succumb to false teaching and lose their soul in hell. Of course, this is just one of many warning given to believers. The warnings are not given to threaten the salvation of believers but to give instruction to them regarding the danger of doctrinal errors (Acts 20:19) that were ready to manifest themselves upon the church. They were to be on constant guard so they do not become one of the statistics that are lead astray by false teachers which are compared to wolves among them.

Although the Bible teaches that the saints cannot totally and forever apostatize from the basic teachings of Christianity and disavow their faith in Christ (Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:39), Paul’s remarks remind us that believers, especially young converts not grounded in the faith, can become theologically sidetracked and disillusioned by the errors of false teaching. Therefore, they must maintain their guard and the elders must keep teaching them the truth so the saints can counteract the error that was being introduced. Once again, this is warning not to be caught up in error; not a warning about being damned to hell.

1 Timothy 4:1

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”

Many times people assume that a Bible text is teaching something if one reads between the lines. We must be very careful about reading between the lines. We simply must read what the Bible says. Of course, this Bible verse, among many others dealing with apostasy, are never intended to teach or assume that a Christian can lose his salvation. In this case, as in others (2 Pet.2:1; 19-21), the departure from the faith speaks of a permanent departure from the truth that proves a person was never saved and born again. Apostasy in the fullest and final sense is always an indicator of a person’s unsaved status. In other words, it indicates that they were NEVER saved. They never embraced the truth of the Gospel of salvation and many other Biblical trues in their hearts. As a result, they can apostatize or depart from these primary truths of Christianity and demonstrate that they were

never part of God's true redeemed people (1 John 2:19). Remember that there are always tares among the wheat (Matt. 13:25).

1 Timothy 1:5-6

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved (missed the mark) have turned aside unto vain jangling" (babble or meaningless and confusing talk which is not according to true and sound doctrine).

Since these false teachers are said to love teaching the Mosaic Law, they were likely legalists teaching that observing the Mosaic Law saved a person (1 Tim. 1:7). In other words, they were misusing the law (Acts 15:1). They were leading believers out of the liberty of grace (Gal. 5:1ff) into the bondage of legalism.

They are mentioned here as having apostatized or totally "swerved" away from the truth of the Gospel (missed the mark or deviated from the truth). This meaning of this word "swerved" was not a question of these men trying to reach the truth; they did not even aim for the truth. As a result, they turned aside to idle or empty talk ("vain jangling"). In other words, their legalistic preaching to gain justification before God by human obedience was aimless; it led nowhere; it failed to save souls and make men holy.

The Bible also speaks of believers who can in some measure turn away from what is truthful and right in relationship to both doctrine, deception, and living (2 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 3:12; Rev. 3:16; Luke 22:61; Gal. 2:13-14). There are several types of departure referenced in the Scripture. Christians can turn away from certain truths and experience hardship and punishment from God (Heb. 12:7) while unbelievers can turn away from the basic tenants of the Gospel and Christian faith, completely abandon truth, and not experience chastisement from God (Heb. 12:8).

1 Timothy 1:19-20 is a case in point:

"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith ("the faith" = what Christians are to believe and practice) have made shipwreck (a conscience that is spiritually defiled): Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander (two practicing elders); whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

Here we see an unusual peek into the discipline of two actual believers (possibly elders in the church) who were by apostolic authority turned over to the realm of Satan for a good beating, so they might repent of their false teaching or living and once again embrace what was proper and true.

If these two were not genuine believers, there would be no need to turn them over to the open domain of Satan's influence, since they would already be open to this treatment by the devil (Eph. 2:2). If these men were unsaved, delivering them over to Satan would be a worthless cause. It would not benefit their character or seek to bring about their repentance and transformation. In fact, it would only make them blaspheme more (Rev. 16:9, 11, 21).

This turning over to Satan is a special authority the apostles possessed which we do not have today. It was an apostolic prerogative. We find no mention of the churches practicing this procedure. Therefore, we have no right or authority to deliver any man over to Satan, as the apostle Paul did (1 Cor. 5:5). Peter also invoked God's judgment upon two Christians for lying (Acts 5:1-11). These are apostolic prerogatives and they are not given to men in the church today.

Turning a genuine believer over to Satan reminds us that although genuine believers will not apostatize finally and forever from the basis tenants of Christianity and faith in Christ, they can teach error and in this case they are being severely chastised for the errors of their way. This same chastisement principle is seen elsewhere (Heb. 12:6).

Getting back to 1 Timothy 1:20, what does it mean to hand or turn someone over to Satan? Handing someone over to Satan may mean that Satan had permission to inflict some illness or disability on the evildoer. Of course, Satan must get permission from God to inflict harm on a believer (Job 2:6). Turning one over to Satan pictures excommunication and life outside the protective fellowship of the church within Satan's sphere and domain, the place where Satan can spiritually and possibly physically bring attacks upon an individual.

1 Corinthians 5:5 is another case in point:

"To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (the battering and premature death of the body), that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

Paul meant here that he had delivered this particular man to Satan, with God's permission of course, to experience bodily affliction which may result on his premature death ("the destruction of the flesh"). God was also bringing premature death on other Corinthians for their improper conduct during the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:30; 1 John 5:16). We have no record that this man mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:5 died prematurely, although he may have. Premature death might be his judgment (the "worst case scenario") if he did not repent.

The reason for the taking of this one's life was so "the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ." This means that although the body of this Christian is put to death the salvation of the spirit of this person will be confirmed in the future. Although the body (*sarx*) is destroyed the spirit of this person is saved and this will be confirmed and validated at the Judgment Seat of Christ ("the day of the Lord Jesus Christ"), the time when this person is judged as a saint and not a sinner that is separated from God.

Again, what does it mean to deliver someone to Satan? To deliver Christians over to Satan would mean that Paul had removed (excommunicated) them from the church's fellowship and placed them within Satan's realm or domain where they would experience Satan's full wickedness and attacks from both a physical, emotional, and spiritual standpoint. This is definitely something different than the normal temptations and hardships that believers face from Satan. Deliverance to Satan must mean deliverance to the authority and control of Satan in a way that is different from the way all believers can be under Satan's control.

Since the men in 1 Corinthians 5:5 and 1 Timothy 6:20 were truly saved, the brutality and buffeting by Satan should cause them to see their error, repent, and forsake their sin. The two men in Timothy's epistle appear to have been leaders, teachers, and even elders in the Ephesian church. It was very rare for Paul to name names when referring to serious sinners.

Robert Gromacki remarks:

"Their deliverance in 1 Timothy 1:20 does not involve a consignment to Hades or the lake of fire or a loss of salvation. Rather, it is done for the believer's spiritual benefit. Outside the church is the world, the sphere of Satan's dominion (Eph. 2:12; Col. 1:13; 1 John 5:19). It is in that realm that Paul wanted to see the immoral Christian chastised. In essence, he called for excommunication and the withdrawal of all local church privileges."

Again, this was one way in which the apostles exercised their authority over the early church during the initial years when the church was being founded and established (Acts 5). People may commit sins that lead to their premature deaths today but not spiritual death since God has promised everlasting life to every Gospel believer (John 6:47). However, we must remember that there is no indication in Scripture that what Paul did here is normative for church leaders in cases of church discipline.

1 Timothy 6:21 likely speaks of these same men once again: “Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee. Amen.”

Christians can err conserving the faith (what Christians normally teach and believe) but not totally abandon the faith and ultimately deny Christ and the way of salvation. Erring from the faith is not the same as totally abandoning the faith and turning one’s back on God.

2 Timothy 2:17-18 picks up the story of this man Hymenaeus and mentions another man Philetus who were teaching error. In fact, Paul now explains their false teaching: “And their word (what they were teaching) will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some.”

Apparently these men, being influenced by pagan and Platonic philosophy, began teaching a spiritualized resurrection of believers. Instead of embracing the truth about a bodily resurrection of believers at the Rapture, they were teaching only a spiritual resurrection, probably relating the teaching about resurrection to conversion or new birth. They did this since pagan philosophy taught that the body itself was sinful and that people were trapped in their human body. Therefore, to spiritualize the resurrection and deny a future bodily resurrection of believers was a serious breach of apostolic doctrine. This is why Paul took measures to punish these two elders who were embracing this kind of error.

Some conditional salvations sometimes argue that Adam and Eve lost their salvation and therefore we can lose our salvation as well due to apostasy or turning away from what is right. Of course, this is an absurd conclusion. This is because Adam and Eve did NOT lose their salvation. They NEVER had

salvation when they were first created. This is because they were created in innocence and perfection and therefore were not saved when they were originally created (Gen. 1:27-31). The original couple was lost after they lived in a state of perfection – they were not lost after being saved. Adam and Eve were born in perfection and became lost sinners that needed to be saved. They were not saved sinners that became lost sinners. Of course, the perfect condition of Adam and Eve cannot be experienced today by any person since everyone is born in sin (Ps. 51:5). Lost sinners today are born in sin and need to be saved.

John 8:30-32

“As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

Some have tried to use these verses to prove that a believer can apostatize and lose his or her salvation after they have been saved. The argument is given that a person must believe, as Jesus taught, and then continue to be a follower and disciple of His if one wants to maintain his salvation. However, this is reading something into this verse and section of Scripture that Jesus never intended to teach. Jesus states that the religious scribes and Pharisees needed to possess true saving faith in Christ (John 8:24). The Scriptures declare that after hearing the words of Jesus (John 8:30) that many of these same religious people did believe on Christ (John 8:31). However, this was evidently a superficial and shallow faith.

There is really nothing in the text to convince us that this was another group of Jewish people that believed. Apparently they were the same group that Jesus just condemned for never having salvation. Verses 24-33 seem to suggest one progression of thought and dialogue between Christ and these religious people, who were said to believe on Him. But what kind of faith or belief did the scribes and Pharisees possess? It certainly was not saving faith, because these people never admitted they were in bondage to sin (John 8:33) and Christ later said that these people were of the devil (John 8:44). Furthermore, it was this same group of people that decided to rise up and stone Him (John 8:59). Therefore, the type of faith they expressed in John 8:31 was not saving faith but a superficial faith.

Many people today, like the religious people of Christ's day, are impressed and even mesmerized with Jesus Christ, by what He says and does, but they are not ready to commit their trust in Him alone for the salvation of their soul. The religious people in Christ's day were said to believe in Christ (John 8:31) but their "belief" merely indicates that they paid attention (gave mental assent) to Jesus' words without necessarily committing themselves to Him personally as Savior (John 6:53).

Those who teach that these people were saved and needed to maintain their salvation through works of discipleship are not being fair to the text and what Jesus said about these people. This group of people were never saved and Jesus was simply making the point that if they do continue to follow Him (John 8:31) this would become the proof of their salvation – not the way of salvation.

John 2:23-25 is another similar verse:

"Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man."

This text reveals that some people believed on Jesus but Jesus did not believe on them. These verses reveal that these people were NEVER saved. They certainly were not saved and then lost as some suggest. The faith or belief that these people possessed was a type of superficial faith that looks to Jesus for physical miracles but refuses to look to Christ for the greatest miracle of all, the miracle of salvation. This type of faith also falls short of saving faith. Multitudes followed Christ during His earthly ministry and possessed faith in Christ, as the miracle man. These people wanted to witness the miracles of Jesus. They were caught up in the spectacular element wrapped around Christ. He was the "man of Galilee" but He was not the God-man and Savior of their soul. As you read this account, you will notice that many were said to have believed in Christ after witnessing His miracles; however, this type of faith was not genuine saving faith. It was a faith expressed in Christ as the great "miracle man" and not the great Savior of mankind (John 4:42).

Simon is another case of someone who believed in the miracle workings of Jesus but he did not believe in Jesus so that his soul might be delivered from

sin and hell. Although some have used these passages to teach that Simon was saved and then lost they are once again reading their own teaching into the text instead of God's teaching.

Acts 8:13

“Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.”

Simon was amazed at the miracles that Jesus did. He wanted to be part of the miraculous and spectacular element that was going on among the disciple's lives. He wanted miraculous power and was overtaken by the thrill of what was happening. He was like a boy watching a smash up derby that was full of cars running into each other. The excitement was overwhelming. His heart was NOT convicted about his sins and lost estate before God. Instead, Simon was convinced he could possess the same healing and miraculous gifts of the apostles. Therefore, Simon's belief was spurious or counterfeit, since he did not believe in Jesus for the salvation of his soul. He believed in Jesus in order to get what he wanted – the miraculous. He wanted the same miraculous powers the apostles were demonstrating before the people. He was not a prophet for hire but a sorcerer for hire!

Acts 8:18-23

“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and *in* the bond of iniquity.”

Here is a man who believed superficially in Christ because of the miracles and hype that were associated with Christ's followers. Peter clearly reveals the counterfeit faith or belief of this man when telling him “Thy money perish with thee” and exclaiming “thy heart is not right in the sight of God.” Simon was an imposter. He was not saved and then lost. He was never saved. He was a tare among the wheat (Matt. 13:24-30). He possessed faith in Christ

for miracles and money, but not a faith in Christ for mercy and the marvel of the new birth.

John 12:37 says:

“But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.”

Miracles do not save people; faith in Christ saves people (Gal. 3:26).

I believe this same type of faith is also recorded in the account of Matthew 7:21-23: “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. 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? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Here are the miracle workers themselves! These people had done the spectacular. They had cast out demons and supposedly performed great supernatural feats in the name and authority of Christ. But Jesus clearly reveals that when He returns to establish His earthly kingdom, He will say to these type of people that He never knew them. Why? It's because their faith was only a superficial faith that was centered on the supernatural or miraculous. These people geared everything around what they could see, experience, or feel. Many people today have a faith in a God that can do a miracle in their lives and this is where their faith stops. It is faith in Jesus for the needed miracle but not faith in Jesus as the Savior of their soul.

John 6:66

“From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

Here we find that other people were called disciples or followers of Christ but they eventually stopped following Jesus. Some suggest by this verse that a true disciple and follower of Christ can be lost if he or she does not maintain their commitment to the Lord. But again, this is reading something into the Bible and missing the correct teaching that Jesus was giving to us. This group had been called “disciples,” but Jesus says they did not believe (“believed not” - John 6:64), and finally they left Him and never followed Him

again. This is the mark of true apostasy. From Jesus' very words, we know that these disciples were never saved by the Father's drawing power (John 6:65).

Charles Spurgeon wrote:

"If the man does not live differently from what he did before, both at home and abroad, his repentance needs to be repented of, and his conversion is a fiction."

Not everyone who claims to believe on Christ is a genuine Christian. Their faith may not be rooted in Christ's finished work but in some other superficial folly that actually keeps them from true saving faith in Christ.

1 Timothy 6:9-10

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

These verses are often used to support that a believer or Christian can apostatize and lose his salvation. The context is dealing with those who are genuine believers who are given a lesson about fleeing covetousness (1 Tim. 6:10-11). In this passage of Scripture there are some practical lessons to be learned by genuine believers who can sacrifice some of the really worthwhile things in life (family time, spiritual growth, church attendance) to gain material wealth. However, mixed within these verses which warn about the dangers of covetousness are some verses that condemn unbelievers whose example of covetous living must not be followed (1 Timothy 6:3-10).

The expressions in these verses "If any man" (vs. 3), "men of corrupt minds" and "destitute of the faith" (vs. 5) describe unbelievers and specifically false teachers who were actually teaching that gain is godliness (vs. 5). It's these same people who are identified as those who predominately follow covetous ways ("some coveted after" – vs. 10) and those who "have erred from the faith" (vs. 10). It's these same people (unbelieving apostates) that ultimately will experience punishment for their covetous ways ("drown men in destruction and perdition" - vs. 9). The sin of covetousness keeps certain people from embracing Christ as Savior and results in their ultimate misery

which is punishment in hell (James 5:1-6). The terms “destruction and perdition” refer to the eternal punishment of the unsaved wicked.

All of these expressions sets these people in contrast with those who are commanded to flee these things (1 Tim. 6:11 – “But thou, O man of God”). However, Paul uses these apostates as a lesson for those who are genuine believers. Gold has replaced God in the lives of these apostates. A love for money is a common characteristic of false teachers (1 Pet. 5:2; 2 Pet. 2:1–3, 15). In contrast to these apostates (unbelievers) we are called upon to be a man of God and flee covetousness (vs. 11).

It’s obvious that Paul was speaking to genuine believers about the perils and pitfalls of covetousness and he was using the illustration of false teachers and apostates, who were overcome by wealth and covetous practices, to teach some valuable and practical lessons to God’s people. Paul was not teaching that God’s people can become apostates and lose their salvation but was speaking of the covetous errors of apostates to teach some valuable lessons regarding the Christian life. We should flee covetousness. This means we should not play the lottery, strive to only be rich, and miss out on the important things that matter most in life.

Other verses that have been misunderstood and misinterpreted as a believer apostatizing and losing his salvation are found in the parables and metaphors that Jesus used. We will name a few of them at this point.

The parable of the wicked servant (Matthew 24:45-5; Luke 12:42-48) teaches that this person is cast in judgment. The conditional salvationist will quickly remind you that the person presented in the parable was once a “servant” of God that backslides or apostatizes with the result of being cast into hell.

Likewise, it’s pointed out that if one is not a wise virgin and becomes unwise, possessing no oil in their lamp (representing the Holy Spirit’s work and life) then that person who was once saved will be lost (Matthew 25:1-13). The same is true regarding the unfaithful or lazy servant (Matthew 25:26-30) who is cast into hell. Lastly, Jesus warned that a saved person can become a goat instead of a sheep and be cast in hell in the end for not living according to God’s standard (Matthew 25:31-46).

Of course, these conclusions are mere assumptions and not what the Bible and Jesus was teaching in these parables. First, the only thing that

condemns a person to hell is their unbelief (John 3:16; 36). Second, a parable is designed to teach one main truth. In all of these parables Jesus was drawing a very clear distinction between the saved and lost by the kind of lifestyle they were living. He was not establishing different scenarios how a saved person can become lost. He was teaching how the unsaved will be separated from the saved when Jesus returns at His Second Coming (wicked and faithful, wise and foolish, sheep and goats). Jesus was not teaching how the saved can be lost at His Second Coming but how those who were never rightly related to Him would manifest their lives at His return.

The parables are simply designed to demonstrate that certain people will evidence their lost condition before God by their overall lack of interest in God's will and program on earth and others will evidence their saved position before God by their increased love and obedience to the Father's will. Elsewhere and in the same prophetic setting Jesus said that the saved, who evidence their salvation by doing "the will of my Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 7:21), would enter the kingdom, while the unsaved that Jesus "never knew" (Matt. 7:23) would not enter the kingdom. Their unsaved life is evidenced by their overall lack of interest in God's will. These parables are given to see the noticeable contrast between those who do the Father's will (the saved) and those who completely fail to engage their life in doing God's will (the unsaved) in view of His coming messianic kingdom program.

It must be stressed that the loss of salvation in regards to a *true* disciple is not being discussed or conveyed by these parables as various writers suggest. This is the dream of the Arminian or conditional salvationist. It is also worthy to note that the actual way of salvation is not considered in these parables. Only the rewards connected with Christ's kingdom blessing are considered.

The way of salvation is not addressed in these parables but the *fruit* of salvation (what comes after salvation) is spoken about by the manner in which righteous living, wise living, faithful service, and loving actions are commended by the King. The parables give the PROOF of one's salvation but do not explain the WAY of salvation.

We have already addresses the parable of the sower that Jesus gave in Matthew 13 and Luke 8. This parable like many others is designed to teach the difference between the saved and unsaved. The key to understanding

this parable is that only those people who bear fruit are genuine believers (Matthew 13:23). You will notice that there is no lasting or genuine fruit (transformation of living) in any of the other people (Matt. 13:20-22). The Bible repeatedly teaches that God's true saints will always bear or produce some fruit or transformation of living to give evidence of their salvation (Eph. 2:10; 2 Pet. 1:10; Titus 1:16). Where there is not fruit there can be no root (genuine repentance and salvation). This means that the falling away of the parables (Luke 8:13) is not referring to apostasy of a true child of God and the loss of his salvation. Instead, they are teaching how unsaved people that are NEVER saved will eventually demonstrate this by their departure from God and His righteous path and ways.

The same truth is brought out in Luke 9:62:

“And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”

Again, Jesus was referring to an unbeliever who gave no evidence that they have been converted and saved. Their answers to Jesus reveal they had not changed their lifestyle or doing their own thing and having their own way in life, which is the indication that they were never saved. The phrase “let the dead bury the dead” probably means let those who are spiritually dead bury the physically dead. This is a clear reference to those who were NEVER born again. As a result, they could not be fit or prepared to enter the earthly messianic kingdom that Jesus was seeking to establish on earth. Again, this is because they were not born again which is the way to enter the kingdom (John 3:5).

Some conditional salvationists will also bring up various verses that deal strictly with Christians and will turn around and use them to threaten believers with loss of their salvation for apostasy or turning away from the Lord.

Ephesians 4:32

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

Matthew 6:15

“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Some make the claim by these verses that if we, as God's children, don't forgive others, then God will not forgive us and we will lose our salvation and end up in hell. In other words, our salvation is conditioned upon forgiving others. Of course, this once again contradicts God's Word which teaches salvation is entirely by grace (Eph. 2:8-9) and has nothing to do with our day to day conduct.

Of course, these verses are teaching that in order to have fellowship and communion with God, as a Christian or true follower of Christ, one must be willing to forgive others and confess these types of sins before God (1 John 1:9), so God can forgive you. If you ask God to forgive you of some sin but are not willing to confess your own sin of unforgiveness to Him, then don't expect God to hear your prayer and grant you forgiveness. This is because you are living a life of open hypocrisy and your prayer will not be answered. David declared long ago in Psalm 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*." We cannot ask for forgiveness and expect to receive it while harboring bitterness in our hearts toward others. Of course, failing to receive forgiveness before God is not to be looked upon as a threat to losing one's salvation. Rather, Jesus is speaking about not possessing proper fellowship with God in our daily lives when we are harboring sin in our hearts toward others.

Remember that David prayed he would have the joy of his salvation restored when confessing his sin (Ps. 51:12). He did not pray that he would regain his salvation again. The joy that is related to salvation speaks of the fellowship that we can have with God when all of our sin is confessed and forsaken.

1 Corinthians 10:12

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Some will use a verse such as this, a warning given to Christians, and turn it around into a warning about hell. It's clear that those who believe in Christ cannot and will not be condemned to hell (John 5:24). Paul is not talking about falling into hell after sinning but falling from one's own spiritual steadfastness and living. The illustration of the Israelites in the wilderness is given as a practical lesson for every believer to be alert in his Christian life so he does not fall into sin (1 Cor. 10:5-11). God chastised His people for their sin while they were in the wilderness. The lesson is very simple. Be cautious and do not allow the same types of sins to overtake your life.

The words “take heed” in this context means to stay mentally alert and put a spiritual guard around our lives (1 Pet. 1:13). In other words, we need to stay on your spiritual tiptoes and not allow sin to overtake our lives. To “take heed” (1 Cor. 10:12) is not a warning that hell might overtake your soul; it’s a warning that sin might overtake your soul. Christians should be on guard and not allow the same types of sin to overtake our Christians lives and keep us from living a life that is pleasing to God (1 Cor. 10:5). This is not a warning about hell and damnation but a warning about staying spiritual alert in one’s Christian life.

Galatians 6:1

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Some will argue from this verse that a Christian must restore another person that has fallen into sin and lost his salvation. This again is assuming something that text does not even remotely suggest. The restoration does not speak of being resaved again but being restored to a place of fellowship with Christ and the church if necessary. First, he is talking about those who are “Brethren” which is a clear reference to Christians who are saved. Yes, the brethren can sin but they are still brethren when sinning! Nothing in this context or anywhere else in the Bible says that a Christian loses his salvation every time he sins. This is an absurdity.

Second, it’s made very clear that this restoration is not to salvation. The Bible never speaks of someone’s salvation being restored but their fellowship with God and spiritual living being restored so that they might once again honor God with their life (1 John 1:7-9; Ps. 51:12). The very context speaks of reaching out to people who are brethren and believers but who need spiritual guidance, encouragement, and help (1 Cor. 6:2, 6). This passage is not talking about evangelizing unbelievers but helping believers in their Christian life. They sometimes need spiritual help for the journey. They might need guidance, encouragement, and redirection in life. This text in Galatians 6:1 is not talking about helping a lost person to be resaved but helping a saved person be restored to a place of spiritual living.

Galatians 6:7-8

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

This set of verses is sometimes used to teach that a person who was once a Christian can sow to their flesh (commit some specific sin), lose his salvation, and wind up in hell. However, other Christians who don't sow to their flesh but allow the Holy Spirit to control them will gain or merit everlasting life. However, this once again is creating a scenario that the Bible is not teaching here nor teaches anywhere else.

Paul is simply stating a universal principle that is true. A person, even a Christian, reaps what he has sown. This is true in this life as well as the next life. It is one of the spiritual laws that applies to everyone.

First, we must understand that Paul is addressing Christians or those who are saved (vs. 8 – “Let him that is taught in the word” and vs. 9 – “Let us not be weary in well doing”). Paul had been talking about Christians (“Brethren” – Gal. 6:1) helping other Christians in the previous verses (Gal. 6:1-6) and now reminds the saints that their actions are very important. The good things that we do in this life will amount to much while the bad or worthless things will be forever lost and worthless.

When a Christian “soweth to the flesh” (Gal. 6:8) it means that he is living by the dictates and power of his old sin nature. Sowing to the flesh is feeding the flesh and yielding to the flesh. These sinful actions will only “reap corruption.” Paul does not say they will reap hell and God's judgment. What he is talking about is that the sinful things we do in the context of our Christian life will not amount to a hill of beans.

The word “corruption” speaks of “ruin, loss, and decay” and this is what happens to those works that we do which originate from the sin nature. Within our personal lives as Christians we reap the hard effects of sins that we commit against God. In other words, when we only live for ourselves, by accumulating wealth and forgetting to support God's house, by striving to gain more pleasures and comforts without living for God, and by committing sinful actions against God and others, we are on one sense living a life of moral corruption and ruin.

This means that our actions are worthless and we will receive no eternal reward for them when we stand before God someday. Think of it this way; the things that we say and do which are contrary to God's holy nature will result in absolutely nothing.

John reminds us that "the world passeth away" (1 John 2:17) or more literally is passing away at this very moment. He also reminds us that when we reap corruption in our lives through sinful acts of self and sin that these choices and actions are passing out of existence as fast as we do them. In other words, there will be no eternal reward for these types of actions. Paul talks about Christians reaping corruption, decay, ruin, and loss in relation to the Christian life today and future life in Heaven.

On the other hand, if the Christian "soweth to the Spirit" (Gal. 6:8) he will "reap life everlasting." Sowing to the Spirit means that our actions and choices in life are directed by the Holy Spirit. We are yielding to the Spirit and bearing the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). In other words, instead of sowing to the flesh (sin nature) we sow to the Spirit, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts, choices and actions. The end result of this type of Christian living is "life everlasting." Many will assume that this means to earn our salvation and eternal life. But the Bible again is not teaching this here or any other places since everlasting life is based upon faith alone (John 3:16; 6:47). When speaking of "life everlasting" Paul is talking about a quality of life that will go on and last for eternity. The phrase "life everlasting" speaks of the future reward and blessing that we will receive someday (a quality of life) that will last forever,

When we practice sowing to the Spirit we will not only experience the abundant life that Jesus promises we can possess right now (John 10:10) but we also will reap the rewards which accompany faithfulness when we stand at the Beam Seat of Christ someday. We will reap a harvest that will last forever! We will reap "life everlasting" which is a future life full of reward and great blessing.

Our entire life as a Christian while living on earth is seen as a period of sowing. Each one of us must remember the importance of sowing to the Spirit and not the sin nature. What we do today matters forever! We are accumulating eternal reward or loss of reward depending on how we are living today.

Paul is not threatening us to live in a certain way in order to gain eternal life but reminding us as Christians that we must live a certain way to experience eternal reward and blessing in the next life.

The condition for receiving this reward is not to grow weary (“let us not be weary in well doing” - Galatians 6:9). The expression describes a bow string that has become unstrung and produces a weary sound. Some Christians live their lives in this way. They are discouraged, depressed, and defeated. What causes this sad state to set into our lives is when we lose heart for living for Jesus Christ and eternal things. When we lose focus on eternity we can become caught in the web of present day struggles. Someone said, “Giving up mentally leads to growing faint spiritually.”

When we give up from a mental and spiritual standpoint it's because we forget about the future and all the reward and blessings that await faithful Christian followers and living. So, don't forget to sow to the Spirit, which means we must allow the Holy Spirit to grow and sanctify us. The end result of sowing to the Spirit will be not only result in future reward, which is described as a quality of future life (life everlasting) but sowing to the Spirit means that we will be given the ability to go on in life, to not become weary in living for Jesus and serving Him.

It is easy for the servants of God to become discouraged: the opposition they meet is so constant and the good they are trying to do is so hard to accomplish. But the power and ministry of the Spirit of God in our hearts and lives will keep us living abundantly, effectively, meaningfully, and joyfully.

Another set of verses that is often used to promote a works salvation are those verses that teach a person cannot do certain things or else they will be lost and go to hell.

Galatians 5:19-21

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

The Bible is not teaching here that when a person commits a specific sin, whatever that sin might be (“and such like”), that they lose their salvation and are doomed to hell unless they repent and get right with God. The word “do” is in the present tense and speaks of an ongoing practice of sin. It can be understood as someone who continually practices sin as a way of life without giving any signs of repentance, salvation and transformation to authenticate their salvation before God. A person can say they are a Christian and live like the devil without any signs of regenerating life. Paul says that this type of person was NEVER saved and will not inherit the kingdom of God. It’s not they were saved and then lost. They were NEVER saved. Practicing a lifestyle of sin without repentance and transformation is the telltale sign that this person is not saved and will not inherit God’s eternal kingdom.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 declares the same truth:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

Those people who are addressed as “unrighteous” are those who are committed to living a sinful life of rebellion without possessing any fruit of the Spirit in their life and outward evidence that they have been saved. It’s very clear that Paul is talking about unsaved people in this verse (those who were never saved) because in the very next verse he states: “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11). In other words, in their unsaved state they used to live like this but now since they have been saved by God they are cleansed from all of these sins and are on the road to living a sanctified life that honors God. Remember that Christians are not perfect; however, they do not live in ongoing open rebellion against God, in a life that is committed to unrighteousness and hatred against God, and one that reflects only the lifestyle of the unredeemed.

Ephesians 5:3-7 once again speaks of this same truth:

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is

an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”

Paul clearly is identifying these people as “children of disobedience” (Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6) and not as children of God (Gal. 3:26). Those whose life is characterized by sin and committed to sin, without showing signs of regenerating life, are labeled as children of disobedience. One does not become a child of disobedience after being saved. The Bible teaches that those who were NEVER saved are labeled as children of disobedience. This is because they are committed to living a life of disobedience that is against God and want only to rebel against His righteous ways.

1 John 3:8

“He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

The “commiteth” once again speaks of a characteristic pattern or way of life. It refers to a person that sins away his life without possessing any interest in spiritual living and righteousness. If one lives like the devil, they are the devil’s children (John 8:44), not God’s children.

1 John 3:10 says:

“In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

John teaches the same thing as Paul. Those who continually practice sin as a pattern of life, without evidencing any transformation of living, give proof that they were NEVER saved. They are “not of God” and do not possess salvation.

In all of the above verses Paul is not threatening Christians with the loss of salvation but reminding them of people who never possessed salvation. Paul is talking about those people who practice sin as a way of life, who give no evidence that God has saved them. It’s these people that have never been born again and become a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).

A final set of verses that are often used to promote legalism (a works salvation based upon obedience) are those verses that speak of obedience of faith. Many will join together one's faith with their obedience and claim that obedience is part of one's salvation before God.

Romans 1:5

"By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name."

Paul was to preach "obedience to the faith" (literally - "obedience faith) among the nations and this is also our Great Commission. Paul was commissioned to call men of all nations to obedience of faith which means to obey the message of the Gospel by repenting and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21). Faith is obedience to God because God commands everyone to believe in Christ (John 6:29; Acts 17:30–31).

Romans 16:26 reveals a similar truth:

"But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."

Acts 6:7 declares: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

The Bible repeatedly talks about an obedience of faith which is related to the nations and individual people believing in the Gospel message. The "obedience of faith" is talking about the way a person is saved.

Please note that this does not say "Faith + obedience" but obedience of faith which is one specific act or expression of obedience which saves a person. These verses are talking about taking an obedient step of obedience to believe in the Gospel message about Jesus Christ. The only obedient step one can take in order to be saved is to express faith or belief in Christ.

Someone once said:

"The only thing you can do without doing anything is believe."

Obedience is a *synonym* for coming to Christ (faith) at the time of salvation. It does not refer to following Christ as a disciple or any meritorious work that one must do to be saved. Obedience is responding to Christ in faith. Disobedience is the failure to respond to Christ in faith.

John 6:29

“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”

Obedying the Gospel does not refer to obeying Christ to merit or earn one’s salvation but obeying what Christ asks a sinner to do in order to be saved – believe (John 6:47). The only obedient step one can take in order to be saved is to express faith in Christ.

Warren Wiersbe has stated:

“Trusting Christ is not only a matter of believing, but also obeying. Not to believe on Christ is to disobey God.”

1 Peter 4:17-18

For the time *is come* (last days within the Church Age – a time of growing animosity and persecution against Christians) that judgment (context of vv. 12-16 refers to judgment coming from the unsaved - persecution for being a Christian – it does not reference the Judgment Seat of Christ for Christians) must begin at the house of God (metaphor for the Church): and if *it first begin* at us (persecution for Christ begins with believers who are living during the last days of the Church Age), what shall the end *be* of them (referring to the unsaved who will be judged in the future at the Great White Throne Judgment) that obey not the gospel of God? (by rejecting and failing to embrace its message).

Romans 10:16 explains is this way:

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?”

The only way a person can disobey the Gospel message is to not believe in it and the only way a person can obey the truth of the Gospel for salvation is to express faith in it. Therefore, the only way a person can obey the Gospel message is to believe in it, or express faith in Christ. An obedient faith is then a believing faith, a faith that rests fully in Christ and His free offer of salvation.

Belief is an act of obedience in the Gospel message, but disbelief is an act of disobedience in the Gospel message. Several other verses bring out this same truth.

1 Peter 1:22

“Seeing ye have purified your souls (salvation’s purification from all of our sins) in obeying the truth (being obedient to the Gospel message by expressing faith in Christ) through the Spirit (the Spirit’s drawing and conviction) unto unfeigned love of the brethren (the result of salvation), see *that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*”

1 Peter 2:7

“Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient (by rejecting the Gospel message), the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.”

The sinner’s obedient faith in the Gospel message at the time of his conversion is non-meritorious. However, commanding that a sinner must have faith in Christ but also follow and obey Christ, make a contract with God, or promise to follow Him the rest of his life is not part of the conversion response. This kind of “Lordship Salvation” teaching becomes a meritorious work on the person’s behalf.

Here is the point. The obedience of faith which is placed in Christ for initial salvation (John 6:29) has nothing to do with the obedience that comes after salvation (James 2:17, 26). To conclude that a person’s obedient faith, at the time of one’s salvation, means that they must obey and follow Christ in order to be saved is erroneous and becomes a desperate attempt to promote the misguided teaching of Lordship Salvation. The Scriptures are very clear on the matter of saving faith. Faith involves trusting in Christ – not following Christ. Obedience in everyday living is not the prerequisite to receiving salvation; it is the product of salvation. But the obedience that is related to salvation is the obedience of faith which is expressing faith in Christ alone for one’s salvation.

1 Peter 1:2 reveals the same truth about the obedience of faith:

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.”

It's assumed by some that we are chosen by God on the basis of our obedience or how well we obey God in this life. In other words, without obedience we cannot be saved. This has been the Arminian view that is still taught today. If one does not properly obey Christ, they can be finally lost in the end and go to hell. Once again, we must ask what it means to properly obey Christ? Is it 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, or 100% obedience that saves a person? This is a valid question and proves that no person could ever know they are saved if they actually base their salvation on a works obedience and legalistic salvation approach to God.

The phrase "unto obedience" speaks of the act of obedience that is related to faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, the sacrificial death of Christ, or faith in the Gospel message. The phrase "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" is joined together and give an understanding that we must be obedient to the message or teaching about the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel message of the blood of Jesus Christ must be obeyed and there is only one way to obey it – by expressing faith in the content or message of the Gospel. Obeying the Gospel does not refer to obeying Christ in order to merit our salvation but obeying what Christ asks a sinner to do in order to be saved – believe (John 6:47).

Warren Wiersbe has stated:

"Trusting Christ is not only a matter of believing, but also obeying. Not to believe on Christ is to disobey God."

The only obedience that can be connected or related to the Gospel message about the blood of Jesus Christ is an obedient response of belief in this message. Therefore, to disobey the Gospel obviously means that one fails to embrace by faith the message of salvation through Christ's precious blood.

Romans 10:16 explains it this way:

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?"

The actual content of one's obedience (an obedient faith) is in the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This confirms once again that this obedience is not talking about an obedience of works (legalistic salvation) since our

obedience is linked to the blood of Jesus Christ. It's our single act of obedient faith in the blood of Christ, or the sacrificial death of Jesus on our behalf, that saves us. It's not our works/obedience that saves us.

The sprinkling of the blood of Jesus speaks of the sufferings of Christ on our behalf (Heb. 9:13; Heb. 11:28; 12:24). And the Bible is teaching us that the CONTENT of our faith must be in the cross of Christ, the shedding of His blood, to grant us forgiveness and bring God's elective purpose to pass. The blood of Jesus Christ must be applied to our life in order for us to experience the wonders of salvation.

Sprinkled blood signified forgiveness of sin, for "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). Jesus inaugurated the new covenant by shedding his blood once for all at Golgotha. Because of that sprinkled blood, believers can enter the presence of God as forgiven sinners (Heb. 10:22; 1 Peter 1:2).

Hebrews 12:24

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

Sprinkled blood speaks of the saving benefits received through the shedding of Christ's blood. As soon as a person obeys the gospel by believing on Jesus Christ, he receives all the benefits which flow from the shedding of Christ's blood on Calvary. The Savior's blood was shed once for all over 1900 years ago; it will never be shed again. But we receive forgiveness, redemption, and the other innumerable blessings that flow from this precious crimson tide as soon as we believe on Him.

As long as the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ flowed through His veins, it had no saving value for us; but when that precious blood was shed on the cross, Jesus Christ provided salvation for us. Without the shedding of Christ's blood and sacrificial death there could be no salvation and the completing of God's plan for election.

III. Give proof that people CANNOT lose their salvation (since Christ died only once to save them forever).

**Three Explanations of Texts that are Used
to Discredit Eternal Security ...**

**Give proof that people ARE saved
(not the way of their salvation)**

**Give proof that people NEVER were saved
(not that they lost their salvation)**

**Give proof that people CANNOT lose
their salvation
(since Christ died only once to save them).**

The final group of verses we would like to deal with in this study are some specific verses which have been misinterpreted in the **epistle of Hebrews** (**chapters 2, 6, 10**) to teach conditional salvation or that a person can be saved and then become lost because of his sin.

The Arminian/Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, and the Assemblies of God that grew out of it, have both historically rejected the belief in eternal security. They believe and teach that it is possible for a person to be once saved and then turn from God and be lost again. The claim that the epistle of Hebrews clear teaches that a person can lose one's salvation.

These Hebrew passages have been taken in various ways, even by interpreters who hold that a Christian cannot lose his salvation. Since the rest of the Bible is clear in its testimony that a person who is in Christ cannot be lost, there are multiple ways to view these Hebrew texts of Scripture and still maintain that a believer cannot lose his salvation.

Some teach that the warning is against mere profession of faith which falls short of salvation, or tasting but not really partaking of salvation. This is the apostasy view. Others teach that hypothetically if a Christian could lose his salvation, there is no provision for repentance and salvation. Others teach that these passages are a warning of the danger of a Christian from becoming disqualified for future and further service (1 Cor. 9:27).

The best way to understand these passages, without redefining the simplicity of what is being said and the terms of salvation, repentance and faith is to view them as a hypothetical situation or impossible scenario which could not occur. The sense the writer is giving is like this: If a believer could apostatize and lose his salvation, he could never get it back, since Christ's died only once and cannot be reoffered on the cross (Heb. 10:26). Of course, it's really IMPOSSIBLE for a believer to lose his salvation since Christ died only once

to save us forever (Heb. 10:12-14). So, why not just rest in the finished work of Christ!

I remember a particular scary incident that occurred in my own life one day when I was handing out Gospel tracts. I walked around the backside of a trailer, when all of a sudden, a German Shepherd dog jumped out at me. The man called the dog off and he stopped right in front of my stomach. I could feel the breath coming out of his nostrils! Apparently the German Shepherd did not like the Gospel or me! Needless to say, this incident was a scary event in my life. I'm sure many of us could give stories about how we were frightened by something that occurred in our lives.

There are those who suggest that the warning passages in the epistle of Hebrews (chapters 2, 6, 10, 12) were given to frighten God's people and keep them under the fear of God's reprisal and judgment. However, the epistle to the Hebrews was not written to frighten people, but to encourage people. We are commanded to "exhort (encourage) one another daily" (Heb. 3:13). We are not called upon to frighten one another about the possibility of being condemned to hell if we don't measure up to God's commands. This epistle reminds us that we are to have "strong consolation" (comfort) in Jesus Christ knowing our sins are forgiven and we are free from judgment (Heb. 6:18).

Donald Grey Barnhouse used to say:

"The Book of Hebrews was written to the Hebrews to tell them to stop being Hebrews."

This is what the writer of Hebrews is teaching. He wants the Christians to stop looking back at the sacrificial system, thinking that God still requires the sacrifices of animals to take away sin. Instead, he is challenging them to only look to Christ as the finished and final sacrifice to make a person acceptable before God (Heb. 10:12).

There seems to be much internal evidence in the epistle that would point to the fact that these Hebrew believers lacked the assurance of their salvation and needed to gain assurance. The writer urges them to possess the "full assurance of hope" (Heb. 6:11) that they were forgiven, saved, and going to Heaven and the "full assurance of faith" in Christ alone (Heb. 10:22) by inviting them to reflect upon the finished work of Christ on their behalf (Heb. 1:3; 10:10-14). He also urges them to not cast away their confidence in the

Lord and His saving provision upon the cross (Heb. 10:35) and keep their confession or belief system in Jesus Christ and His saving work to the end of their lives Heb. 3:6, 14; 4:14; 10:23).

Our confession and belief system should be to trust in Christ from start to finish. It should be one expression of faith in Christ for our salvation after another (Romans 1:17). Our faith should never end but continue to bloom and blossom in Christ's sufficiency.

A chart appears on the next page to help us better understand the teaching of the epistle of Hebrews.

The chapters which are often misunderstood to teach condition salvation (Hebrews 2, 6, 10, 12) are not written to cause believers to DOUBT their salvation but they are used as a teaching tool to give them the ASSURANCE of their salvation. In other words, they are not chapters which are written to convey an impossible or hypothetical situation that could not occur in order actually provide encouragement that Christ's sacrifice is enough to save a person forever.

The Hypothetical/Impossible Scenario of Hebrews Chapters 2, 6, 10, 12

HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION AND ATTENTION GETTER:

If "we" could apostatize and lose our salvation, we would be lost forever without any hope, since Christ died only ONCE and paid for sin's penalty only ONCE (**Hebrews 10:26**).

LESSON: It's IMPOSSIBLE to lose our salvation because it's IMPOSSIBLE for Christ's to be re-sacrificed again and His death repeated like the Old Testament sacrifices.

"It is finished" (John 19:30).

CONCLUSION & COMFORT: Why not rest in Christ's final, finished and sufficient sacrifice and stop doubting your salvation (**Heb. 10:12-14**)?

A visitor said to a wounded soldier who lay dying in the hospital, "What church are you of?" "Of the Church of Christ," was the immediate reply. "I mean, what persuasion are you of?" "Persuasion?" said the dying man, as he looked heavenward, beaming with love to the Saviour, "I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come ... shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38).

The writer assures the saints that apostasy and loss of salvation CANNOT happen to those who are truly saved. He reassures them they could NEVER be part of those, who are true apostates, and who will face future perdition or judgment.

Hebrews 10:39

“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

The Bible teaches that God’s people will continue to persevere in their faith in Christ and the basic truths about Christ and Christianity. A true believer will not turn back to finally and forever forsake the Lord Jesus as the only way of salvation. A true Christian will never finally apostatize. So, the writer is not warning these true believers that they can fall into apostasy and lose their salvation.

He is actually presenting them with a hypothetically situation in the disputed chapters of Hebrews. He is telling the believers that if they could apostatize and lose their salvation, then Christ’s sacrifice is not good enough to save anyone, and we would all be lost. So, just rest in Christ and be reassured that your salvation is safe and secure in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

At this point, let’s give a general summary of what the main verses are teaching. We might summarize it in this manner.

Hypothetically, if a believer could apostatize and lose his salvation as indicated by the following statements: “if we neglect” (Heb. 2:3), “If they shall fall away” (Heb. 6:6), “if we sin willfully” (10:26), “if we turn away from him” (Heb. 12:25), then this person would neglect the “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3) offered through the finished work of Jesus Christ and never could be saved again (“How shall we escape” – Heb. 2:3). There would be no escape! **In other words, if a Christian could move into apostasy and lose his salvation, this means that a person would be doomed to hell forever. There are several reasons for this. 1) Because Christ died only ONCE to save them 2) Because Christ CANNOT be reoffered again on the cross 3) Because Christ’s original sacrifice could not save them.** The practical lesson and point is this. A believer apostatizing and losing his salvation is something that could NEVER happen since Jesus died only

ONCE to save people forever (Heb. 10:12-14). So, instead of WORRYING about losing your salvation just REST in the finished work of Christ. Get over it! Just trust in Christ!

Another chart appears on the next page to give us a textual summary and understanding of the Hebrew texts.

Hypothetically, if a believer could apostatize and lose his salvation as indicated by the following statements: **“if we neglect”** (Heb. 2:3), **“If they shall fall away”** (Heb. 6:6), **“if we sin willfully”** (10:26), **“if we turn away from him”** (Heb. 12:25), then this person would neglect the **“so great salvation”** (Heb. 2:3) offered through the finished work of Jesus Christ and never could be saved again (**“How shall we escape”** – Heb. 2:3). This is because Christ cannot be sacrificed again (**“there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin”**) and since Christ’s one sacrifice (Heb. 9:26, 28; 10:10) was not able to save you forever.

Lesson: Stop doubting your salvation and simply trust in Christ! Salvation only resides in His finished and final sacrifice on the cross (John 19:30).

The conjunction “if” sets up the hypothetical situation, impossibility, and dilemma. It’s NOT an “if” that is related to conditional salvation and losing one’s salvation but the “if” that is teaching a hypothetical or impossible situation that could NOT occur based upon Christ’s sufficient death to save people forever. Here is the point once again. If you could be lost, you would be lost forever since there remains no more sacrifice (Heb. 10:26). Since this can never happen, based upon Christ’s finished work on the cross (Heb. 10:12-14), why don’t you just rest in Christ’s final sacrifice and be done with it! His death is enough to save you forever! Thanks be to God it was finished and always will be finished (John 19:30) and that Christ “ever liveth to make

intercession for us” today to maintain our salvation and acceptance before God (Heb. 7:25). Christ died only once to save people forever from the penalty for their sins, providing complete and eternal forgiveness before God’s presence. Since this is true, another sacrifice cannot be made that can provide salvation.

This is not only a hypothetical situation but a very sad situation. If this were true (thank God it isn’t!) it would take away from the sufficiency of Christ’s death. This is what the writer of Hebrews is trying to teach the young Hebrew converts to Christianity. Christ is enough! His sacrifice is complete and you are complete in Him. Just relax, believe that His death is the final sacrifice that will save you forever.

Hebrews 10:18 states:

“Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.”

When sins are finally forgiven through the New Covenant work of Jesus Christ there is no more need for any sacrifices. This means that if the one sacrifice cannot save you, then you are on your own! You can’t be saved. If Christ’s sacrifice is not good enough to save you forever, then it will never be good enough to save you forever. You will be damned forever. Thank God this is not true! Christ’s sacrifice is enough to save you for time and eternity! Just rest in Christ.

License versus Liberty: The argument that says a person can and will desire to live like the devil, if he believes in eternal security, is a vain or empty argument. This is because God’s grace not only saves a person from hell but also transforms his life.

One New Testament expression of grace is the believer’s union with Christ. The context of Romans chapter six teaches that passing through death with Jesus Christ and living in union with Jesus Christ today is one specific way God expresses His grace to us. Our union in Christ’s death and resurrection is the way grace is operative in our lives today. Romans six teaches that this form of grace does not promote sin in our life. Just the opposite is true. Grace teaches us to live victoriously over sin and not yield to sin.

Romans 6:1-2 addresses the absurd reasoning of conditional salvationists: “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Romans 6:15

“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”

The answer to these rhetorical questions is understood. Grace does not teach us to go out and live like the devil the rest of our lives. Grace teaches or instructs us to live a new way of life (“walk in newness of life” – Rom. 6:4). Grace teaches us to “not serve sin” (Rom. 6:6) and “dead indeed to sin” (Rom. 6:11) and that sin should “no longer have dominion” over us (Rom. 6:14). Grace teaches to “yield ourselves unto God” (Rom. 6:13) and not temptation or sin.

In short, no person who is eternally saved by God’s grace will openly avow and conclude that he wants to sin away his life, reject God’s truth, and live like the devil. Why? It’s because they share Christ’s life which sanctifies them and helps them live victoriously over sin. Grace should never be viewed as a license *to* sin but freedom *from* sin.

We are often scolded for believing the doctrine of ETERNAL SECURITY because our critics maintain that it promotes a sinful lifestyle. Since the believer is born again and destined for Heaven, he can live any old way he wants to and still get to go to Heaven. This is absolutely absurd. This would be like saying that because we have Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance, we can now chew on razor blades, slit our wrist for excitement, and gulp down hydrochloric acid.

Our health insurance gives us security, but it doesn't make us want to go out and hurt ourselves. The same is true about God’s grace. It does give us eternal security but at the same time it does not promote a spirit of sinful rebellion in our hearts and lives.

Another expression of New Testament grace is Christ’s death.

Titus 2:11-12

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation (through Christ’s sacrificial death) hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

The grace that is seen in Christ's death on the cross also teaches or disciplines our lives to move away from sin – not follow sin. The death of Jesus on the cross teaches us that God hates sin. It was sin that nailed His Beloved Son to the cross. Therefore, this New Testament expression of grace also teaches us to hate sin and not allow sin to overtake our lives. The fact that Jesus was judged for my sins gives me motivation to live a sanctified life. Jesus paid such a high price because of my sins that I should not want to sin. In rejecting sin, I show my appreciation and gratitude for His gracious death on my behalf. Grace teaches me to say “No” to sin! It does not bait me to sin and live like the devil.

Impossible Transactions: If a Christian could lose his salvation the following impossible transactions would have to occur. We are going to finish this study with what I term as “impossible transactions” that could never happen or take place. However, the person who believes in conditional salvation would have to force these transactions or events to occur in order to maintain the position that one can lose his salvation. The Bible never says any of these *reverse transactions* could occur, but if one could lose their salvation, they would have to take place. Looking at them from a Biblical perspective shows how utterly foolish it is to teach that a truly born again, blood-washed Christian can lose his salvation.

- God would have to leave us and break His promise – “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5).

Does God ever break His promises? Absolutely not. Therefore, we know that God will remain with us our entire life. He will not abandon us.

The writer is making a contrast to a covetousness spirit and is saying that Jesus Christ and His promise is the greatest riches a person can have. What is His promise? “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Even if we have very little on the material level, we have the personal presence of the Lord (Heb. 13:5) and His provisional help (Heb. 13:6). These are the greatest riches of all! We have the Lord, and with Him we have all we need. Contentment cannot come from material things since they can never satisfy the heart. Only God can do satisfy our heart and give us contentment.

A woman said to evangelist D.L. Moody, “I have found a promise that helps me when I am afraid. It is Psalm 56:3 - ‘What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee.’”

Mr. Moody replied, "I have a better promise than that! Isaiah 12:2 - 'I will trust and not be afraid.'" Of course, both promises are true and each has its own application to our lives. The important thing is that we know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Helper and that we do not put our trust or confidence in material things. Contented Christians are those who don't place a high priority on material things.

Here is the promise – "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." God is not breaking His promise. He will NEVER leave His own children. Five negatives are utilized in the Greek New Testament to emphasize the impossibility of Christ deserting believers. It is like saying "there is absolutely no way whatsoever that I will ever, ever leave you."

- Christ would have to cast us away, which He promised never to do (John 6:37).

This verse is placed in the context of election. Someone may ask, "You mean that if I'm not the elect I can still come?" My friend, the Bible does not teach that some people are non-elect. Here is the Biblical truth; if you come, you will be the elect and the Father will not cast you away! This is a tremendous and wonderful reality.

Here is the promise. When we come to Christ in simple faith, believing on Him and His sacrifice to save us, He gives the promise that He will NEVER cast us away. This means we are His forever. What a promise!

- The new birth would have to be reversed, which is an absurdity, since natural birth cannot be reversed (John 3:3,7).

The analogy of new birth teaches eternal security. Have you ever known a baby that came through the mother's womb turn around and say, "Mommy, I want to be unborn?" Of course not. This is silly. In fact, you cannot be physically unborn when you are physically born in this world and the same is true in the spiritual world. You cannot be unborn from a spiritual perspective after your spirit has been born again and made alive spiritually. What is true in the physical realm is true in the spiritual realm.

- We who became a new creature would have to become uncreated (2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10).

This is really teaching the same thing as the new birth analogy. As a result of the new birth or being born again we have become a new creature and creation in Christ. Our position is that the old person we used to be under the power and domination of sin has been put to death and we have become a new person with Christ's regenerating life and power. What we are in our position should translate into everyday practice – the transformation of living.

The Bible nowhere states that after being created we can become uncreated. This is an absurdity. You cannot undo the work of God!

- He who was quickened (made alive) would have to be deadened (Eph. 2:1,5).

The Bible teaches nowhere that when we are made alive spiritually we can become deadened again from a spiritual perspective. We cannot be made unalive after we have been made alive. This belittles the great saving transaction and work of God in our hearts and lives.

- The person who has passed from death unto life would then have to pass from life unto death (John 5:24).

If a person could lose his salvation, the glorious saving transaction of spiritual death to spiritual life would have to be reversed from spiritual life back to spiritual death. The Bible nowhere declares that this is something that could ever happen since Jesus promised to give the believing sinner everlasting spiritual life (John 3:36; 4:14).

- You must claim Christ's work to be unfinished when Jesus said it was finished (John 19:30).

Christ finished paying the work of redemption and salvation for you when He died on the cross in your place. If you can lose your salvation, then you must boldly and arrogantly claim that Christ's work on the cross was not finished and good enough to save your soul forever.

I know that many will tell you that Jesus did pay for the full penalty for our sins but they argue that they must apply or appropriate the benefits of Christ's death to their lives by faith and also by trying to live a good life and earn God's favor. This kind of reasoning is the height of blasphemy. It mocks Christ's death. It is spitting God in the face! When the Bible says that

redemption's price has been paid to the Father it means that nothing else (no work) is necessary, nor could any work ever be done by a sinner, to gain or earn his salvation before God (Isa. 64:6; Eph. 2:8-9). Christ's finished redemption means that Jesus did the work to save us from hell, since we cannot do any good work to save ourselves. Therefore, to claim that you can lose your salvation is a bold declaration that Christ's work was not good enough to pay the sin debt that God required for your redemptive salvation.

- You would have to perish and go to hell which is something Christ said could never happen (John 10:28).

Is the promise of Jesus a mockery or is it true? "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand." Three promises are actually given in this verse. We are freely given eternal, we will never perish (die and go to hell), and no person will sever us from the Father's keeping care and safety. A triple promise. Did Jesus lie when He gave these promises. I know that some have said that we can personally jump out of the Father's hand. Somehow they read into this wonderful promise a conditional promise instead of simply believing what Jesus is teaching. If Jesus were implying that any person can jump out of the Father's hand, He would have clearly revealed this. Actually, He is saying just the opposite. He is teaching the impossibility of being removed from the Father's care and safety. This is the clear intent and teaching of Jesus.

- God would have to break the salvation chain which was planned in eternity past (Romans 8:29-30).

Romans 8:28 reminds us that we may not SEE that all things work together for good but we KNOW (by faith) that everything is working together for our good. This is true regarding our trials in life and also our salvation that God planned in eternity past and which was ultimately designed in the end to conform us to the likeness of His Son. After talking about God's present purpose for our lives, Paul reminds us of God's eternal, saving purpose, which ultimately was designed to make us like Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29-30 is something that occurred in eternity past. God the Father devised a perfect plan in eternity past that a community of people would be saved and destined for to be with Him in Heaven. It is a plan that cannot be overturned since God cemented it in stone in the past counsels of the Godhead. In the mind and plan of God we were called, saved, justified, and

glorified (conformed to Christ's image) in eternity past. It was a done deal from eternity past that can never be undone by someone allegedly losing their salvation. You cannot lose something that was purposed by God for you to have and possess in eternity past.

What can we say about this amazing revelation that God has planned our salvation in eternity past? Only one thing: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31).

We can live "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). Don't call God a liar! He promised to save and give His elect body eternal life even before the earth was created. I'll take God as His Word.

- The Holy Spirit would have to leave us, which is impossible, since we are sealed by Him until the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30).

The Bible teaches that every Gospel believer has been sealed by the Holy Spirit and therefore his salvation is promised and protected until the "day of redemption" which is the final deliverance and salvation that we will experience at the Rapture. It's the time we will get a perfect and sinless body and be redeemed from every sin, disease, and

Where does the Bible teach that we can be unsealed by the Holy Spirit? To teach that we can be unsealed is also a mockery of God's saving work and security that He has promised to His children up to their final redemptive salvation. God has saved us, secured us, and will finally sever us from every sin, disease, and pain that we experience today.

- God would have to break His repeated promises of eternal life (John 3:16, 6:47) and completing what He began (Philippians 1:6).

How can you lose something that is eternal? The truth is that we cannot lose something that Jesus taught was everlasting or eternal. Paul promised that God would complete or bring to pass the work of salvation in our life (Phil. 1:6). "Being confident (possessing absolute assurance) of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you (salvation from the penalty and power of sin) will perform *it* (will continue to work out this wonderful salvation and deliverance in our lives) until the day of Jesus Christ (the day Jesus returns in the Rapture and makes us like Himself).

We can be sure of this! God's promises that what he began He will finish! God never starts something that He does not finish. What a wonderful promise this is.

"Nothing is certain but death and taxes." Benjamin Franklin wrote these words in 1789. Of course, a wise man like Franklin knew there were many other things that were also certain. Christians know there are many spiritual truths that are certainties. Therefore, we are able to say with certainty, "I know that I have eternal life & when I die I will go to Heaven."

- We would have to come into judgment, even though God promised him this would never happen (John 3:36; 5:24; Romans 8:1).

Did Jesus lie when He gave this promise? Did Paul lie when he gave this promise? Does God lie about our salvation? If we really teach and believe that we can go to hell after being delivered from hell, then we are calling God a liar and showing great disrespect for God's grace and promise.

- Christ would have to break His promise to raise His saints in the resurrection (John 6:40; John 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 15:23).

The promise of eternal life and bodily resurrection are tied together. You cannot have one without the other. Only those who have eternal life are given the promise of resurrection. In other words, there is no resurrection without the promise of eternal life. They are both interwoven together in the plan and purpose of God. If a person could lose his salvation this means that the promise that Jesus gave regarding the resurrection of His children who possess eternal life is also a lie.

Jesus promises to physically raise (John 11:25) those who are kept eternally secure with the free gift of everlasting spiritual life (John 11:26). Jesus links physical resurrection with everlasting spiritual life. The person that never dies spiritually can also be confident that he will be raised physically to live on with Jesus Christ forever.

If someone who possesses eternal life is NOT physically raised at the time of resurrection, then this breaks the very promise that Jesus gave about that person's resurrection and further invalidates who Jesus was – the Son of God who rose from the dead, (1 Cor. 15:17). Your eternal life is the promise

of your future bodily resurrection and that which gives authenticity to Christ's promise and His own resurrection. If you can be lost, then this invalidates Christ's promise, which He gave to His children regarding their own bodily resurrection and also casts a dark shadow of doubt over His own resurrection.

- We would have to be unsanctified (1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11), unwashed (1 Cor. 6:11), unjustified (1 Cor. 6:11), unredeemed (Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19), unsealed (Eph. 1:13-14), unchosen (Eph. 1:4), unbaptized and somehow removed from the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

Of course, these saving transactions cannot be undone. The Bible nowhere states that what God has done for His children can be undone by man's feeble attempts to live a good life and secure his own salvation in the end. We have been perfectly sanctified (set apart) in Christ before the Father's throne through the perfect righteousness of Christ. We are forever washed (forgiven) through Christ's blood. We have been declared legally righteous before God through the complete acquittal and righteous of Jesus Christ that we have before God's throne.

We have been redeemed or set free from the penalty and power of sin. We have been chosen by God and baptized by the Holy Spirit and placed into the body of Christ (the Church) and also sealed by the Holy Spirit. None of these glorious saving transactions can be undone. The Bible clearly presents these wonderful saving accomplishments of grace as permanent realities.

How can you unwash something after you have washed it? How can we lose legal acceptance in God's presence after God says we are guiltless and righteous in His sight? How could we lose God's seal which He said is unchanging? How could God not choose us after He said that He would choose us? How could we lose the saving baptism of the Holy Spirit and be removed from the body of Christ, after being joined to Him? To conclude that all of these saving transactions could be reversed and removed is to make God out to be a liar of what He promised to do. Don't call God a liar!

- We would have to be unpreserved (Jude 1), unperfected (Heb. 10:14), unpardoned (Rom. 4:7-8), unaccepted (Eph. 1:6), and un-positioned in Christ's perfect righteousness (Rom. 4:11, 22; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; James 2:23).

Once again, these are saving transactions which cannot be reversed. How can God stop preserving us after He said that He would preserve us in safety? Would go back on His promise of pardoning the believer of every sin? Did God lie to us when He said that He would accept us in the perfect work and person of His beloved Son? Isn't Christ's perfect righteousness good enough to give us full and final acceptance before the throne of God? To answer "no" to any of these questions would make God out to be a liar.

- God would have to disown him as His child – something God never says He will do (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1).
- We who was once a child of the devil but who became a child of God, would then go back to being a child of the devil - a transition which is never spoken about in Scripture (1 John 3:10; John 8:44).

The Bible nowhere teaches that when we become God's children we can be lost and no longer be considered God's child. What is true in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm. A biological child can never be anything other than a biological child. The same is true from a spiritual perspective. Once we are God's children by spiritual birthright we cannot lose our spiritual birthright.

- God would have to break His promise of chastening His children and instead judge them in their sins (1 Corinthians 11:32; Heb. 12:6).

Instead of damning those who were once saved and then lost, God promises to chasten His children and discipline them for their waywardness and backsliding.

- The child of God would have to become a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3).

The Bible says nowhere that God's children are children of wrath. It only says the unsaved, those who were never saved, are children of wrath. The Bible repeatedly teaches that His children will not come under His wrath (John 3:18, 36).

- The Holy Spirit would have to leave us, even though Christ promised the Spirit would abide with him forever (John 14:16).

- God's power would fail us and God would be unsuccessful at keeping the believer safe all the way to his final salvation (1 Peter 1:5).

God's promise and power would be invalidated (weakened and destroyed) if we could lose our salvation and God would be a liar.

- God would have to be against us, even though God said that He is for us (Rom. 8:31-34).

The Bible says that God is always for His children, when it comes to their salvation, deliverance, and acceptance before God. He is not against us but for us!

- Something would have to separate us from the love of God, which God promised would never happen (Rom. 8:35-39).

God's love is unconditional and unending. He lavishes His love upon us and this amazing love is evidenced by God accepting the priestly work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

- Christ would have to stop interceding for us when the Bible promises He intercedes for us forever (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34).
- Christ would have to stop being his Advocate (1 John 2:1).

If we could lose our salvation, then we must conclude that Jesus' High Priestly ministry has failed us, that He was a bad lawyer, and that God the Father did not accept His Son's sacrifice on our behalf.

- Christ's prayer and promise that the Father would keep those given to Him would fail (John 17:11).

Can any prayers of Jesus go unanswered? Can His prayers fail?

- Christ would have to break His promise that we will be with Him in Heaven (John 14:1-3; 17:24).

Can Christ's promises fail? The Bible says that not one word of God's promises will fail (2 Cor. 1:20).

- We would have to lose the divine nature that God gave to us (2 Peter 1:4).
- God's great purpose to conform him to the image of His Son would have to fail (Rom. 8:28-29).

Can God's eternal purposes fail which He said would occur or take place before the foundation of the earth?

- God would have to remember our sins and iniquities again and again, something He promised He would never do (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17).

Will God remember something He said that He would never remember again?

- God would have to allow us to experience the second death (the Lake of Fire), which is something Christ promised would never happen to His own children (Rev. 2:11).
- God would have to allow our name to be blotted out of the book of life, something which Christ promised would never happen to His children (Rev. 3:5).
- God would have to break His promise to never impute sin to the one who has been justified (Rom. 4:8).

The Bible nowhere says that God once again imputes sin to our account or record after we have received the imputed righteousness of God.

- Those believers who were promised to be blessed with spiritual blessings in Christ (Eph. 1:3) would have to be removed from the place of blessing.
- We would have to once again be placed under the curse of God's judgment which Jesus bore on the cross (Galatians 3:13; 1 Cor. 16:22).

This means we would have to be recursed, rejudged, and return to our former state of facing God's penalty of judgment and wrath.

- We who became rich would have to become spiritually poor once again (2 Cor. 8:9).

This means we would have to go bankrupt spiritually and lose all of our riches in Jesus Christ.

- We who was healed spiritually would have to become unhealed (1 Pet. 2:24).

Can you imagine this? Our spiritual wound of sin would have to come back and we would once again become spiritually infected with our sins. This would be like getting chicken pox the second time!

- We who were reconciled to God would have to become at enmity with God once again (2 Cor. 5:18-19; Col. 1:20).

God who once said we were reconciled to Him would have to unreconciled us. This is something the Bible never says nor even implies God will do.

- We who were made nigh (near to God) by the blood of Christ would have to become alienated from Him (Eph. 2:13).
- We who became an heir of God would have to lose our promised inheritance (Rom. 8:17; Titus 3:7).

God would have to go against His promise that we are His heirs. He would have to remove us from being and heir of God.

- We who are seated in heavenly places would have to lose this position (Eph. 2:6).

We would have to be taken out of Christ and no longer possess our heavenly position in Christ, sharing in the righteousness, justification, and acquittal that Jesus Christ has freely given to us.

- We would have to be un-identified with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6).

How can we undie and be unraised with Christ. How can this spiritual reversal of identification with Christ happen?

- We who was positioned in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) would have to lose this position.

Where does the Bible teach that you can be un-positioned in Christ and before God?

- We who were called unto eternal glory would have to be uncalled (2 Pet. 5:10).

How can a person be uncalled? How can you lose the call of God? The Bible says nothing about this.

- We who was a stone in God's building would have to be removed from that structure (Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:5).

How can a stone be removed from the Church without doing damage to other stones and the entire structure of the Church?

- Christ would have to lose part of His bride (Ephesians 5:27).

This is unthinkable! Christ will not lose the One that He loved and gave His life for on the cross but cherish and protect her (the Church) as Ephesians 5:29 confirms.

- God who promised to keep us from falling into apostasy and present us faultless before the throne would fail us (Jude 24).

The Bible teaches that God's people will continue to persevere in their faith in Christ (Romans 1:17) and the basic truths about Christ and Christianity. A true believer will not turn back to finally and forever forsake the Lord Jesus as the only way of salvation. A true Christian will never finally apostatize in doctrine and living.

- We would have to lose our citizenship in Heaven (Phil. 3:20).

How can you lose your citizenship in Heaven? Where does the Bible teach that you lose your status as a citizen within the heavenly city?

- God's reservation in heaven (an inheritance "reserved in heaven") would have to fail or become invalid (1 Peter 1:4).

Where does the Bible teach that your reservation in Heaven can be canceled? Where does the Bible say that God will cancel our reservation in the heavenly city?

- God would have to reverse or strip the believer of being part of a chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people for a possession of His own, and throw the believer back into darkness and out of His wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9).

Think of this. If you could lose your salvation, you would have to be unchosen by God, be taken out of the priesthood of believers, no longer be the personal possession of God, and we would be transferred back into spiritual darkness, blindness, and have to wait for the Holy Spirit to open our eyes and hearts again to the plan of salvation.

- The Father would have to undo His work of making us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light, and untranslated us out of the kingdom of His Son, and deliver him back into the authority of darkness (Col. 1:12-13).

This is similar to the previous point. If we could lose our salvation, we would have to be taken out of God's kingdom and once again go back under the authority of Satan and spiritual darkness.

- Christ would have to turn us back into darkness and under the power of Satan, unforgive our sins, take back the inheritance He gave to us, and un-sanctify us before God's throne (Acts 26:18).

Think: If all of these above scenarios are true (thank God they are not!), this would mean that it's actually my good works that really save me. If God has ONLY provided the death of Christ as a means for us to *potentially* save ourselves through good works, then the death of Christ did NOT actually secure or promise salvation for the believer. This is because the final

determination of a person's salvation is their individual performance, not the grace of God.

If God agreed to 99% of the work of salvation, we could have no certainty we accomplished our part of the bargain. We would never know if we did our 1% until we were dead, and that's too late! How much better to simply trust in the promise of eternal life that Jesus gave to us (John 6:47) and rest in the sufficiency of the death of Jesus Christ to provide us with eternal forgiveness, righteousness, and sanctification in the presence of God (1 Cor. 1:30).

Here is the testimony of one who used to doubt his salvation. It is somewhat revealing and informative. "During my childhood I realized my teachers seemed to draw the line of salvation forfeiture at different places. One person would set forth a set of don'ts which hardly ever corresponded with the next person's set of don'ts. I could not find any two people to agree where the line was to be drawn, that after a believer crossed that line he was declared out of the circle. Some may disagree with me, but I happen to think that the way of obtaining salvation is very simple and clear.

The issue is faith in Christ and nothing more (John 3:16, 18, 36; 20:31; Acts 4:12; 16:31; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9 etc.). Now, if the Bible is so very clear regarding how to be saved and to enter into the circle, why would the Bible then be ambiguous regarding the forfeiture of that salvation? If the loss of salvation were a possibility, wouldn't God be specific to tell His children where the line is to be drawn so as to be sure to stay away from it. So, where is the line?"

This is the point. Nobody knows where the line is when it comes to losing salvation. This is because there is no line. When a person is saved they are saved forever. This is God's promise (John 6:47).

We conclude this lengthy study with some very good news!

The Bible says we are:

- Preserved forever in Christ's saving work – Jude 1
- Perfected forever in Christ's finished work – Heb. 10:14
- Pardoned forever by Christ's amazing grace – Rom. 4:7-8
- Positioned forever in Christ's perfection righteousness – Eph. 1:6

Instead of trying to "wrest" or twist the Scriptures (2 Pet. 3:16) by teaching that a saved person can lose his or her salvation, you should rest in the truth

of Scripture that the work of salvation is finished (John 19:30) and that you are saved and prepared to meet God by the free expression of grace found in Jesus Christ alone (Rom. 3:24).

“Mercy there was great, and grace was free;
Pardon there was multiplied to me;
There my burdened soul found liberty,
At Calvary.”