Study of the Doctrine of Salvation

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Introduction

In this study I will expound on the subject of salvation and explore some of the erroneous beliefs and misconceptions that unbelievers (as well as believers) commonly possess. I will outline and explain the steps that the Lord has designed within this magnificent book we know as the Bible. I pray that you will be able to study and to concentrate objectively as this discourse unfolds.

For the unbeliever, I pray that after this reading you will have a crystal clear comprehension of the Lord's infinite love toward all humanity, as well as His love toward you personally. It is my prayer as well that you will joyously accept this free gift.

For my fellow believers, may this study provide valuable insight, so that being further enlightened you may share our Lord's Gospel with greater accuracy.

What is this Salvation From?

To begin this study, let's first examine the word **'**salvation**'.** The word 'salvation' comes from the Greek word *soteria* and means 'to be saved, to be delivered, to be preserved'. The concept related by this word is one of being rescued or delivered from a lost status to a position of safety. While the word also connotes a deliverance from physical harm or physical death, the focus of this study is the deliverance from the consequences of our spiritual death that has (as a result) eternal condemnation to a place referred to as the 'lake of the fire'. This condemnation is more commonly understood as spending eternity future in hell. (The alternative to hell is to spend the future of eternity in heaven with God—in a state without grief or pain—because the old order of things would have passed away [Rev. 21:4].)

Hell is a subject about which the Bible speaks very clearly, and should not be viewed casually or disregarded. (Contrary to popular belief, one who is consigned to hell will by no means be in a state of rest!) Ignoring hell does not change the reality of its existence any more than ignoring the fact that if you jump out of an airplane head first, you will crack your head wide open. Fortunately, God has provided a solution for this problem through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (which we will see as we progress through this study).

Hell is commonly referred to in the Bible as the 'lake of the fire'. This lake of the fire will not be the final destination for fallen angels alone, but it is also reserved for all unbelieving mankind who did not accept Christ for salvation. In Matthew 25:41 we are told that hell was originally prepared for Satan and his fallen angels. Unfortunately, unbelievers will also be cast into the lake of fire. (Now the reference to unbelievers is not made to those who don't believe in God, but specifically to those who don't believe in Jesus

Christ as their personal Savior.) Jesus alone is God's solution; the only alternative to spending eternity future in the lake of fire.

In Luke 16:19-31 (in the example of the rich man and destitute Lazarus), we have a glimpse of what occurs when an unbeliever dies. The rich man's soul departed with an interim or temporary body into the fire of torments. Lazarus, the poor man, also died and was carried by the angels to be with Abraham (Luke 16:22-23).

We know that both the rich man and Lazarus possessed interim bodies, because in Luke 16:24 the rich man called to Abraham and asked him to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool the tongue of the rich man. As will be the case with the rich man, eventually every unbeliever will be resurrected with a body of damnation (John 5:28-29) to stand trial at the Great White Throne of the Last Judgment[1] (Rev. 20:11-15). Unbelievers will be judged on the merit of their own self-righteous human works, which are equivalent to human righteousness or relative righteousness.

The sins of the unbeliever will not be the issue because the judgment of man's sins has already been poured out on Jesus Christ on the cross (1 John 2:2). As God is holy and can only accept perfect divine righteousness (which is what the Lord Jesus Christ provides when we accept Him by faith), the unbeliever who rejects Jesus Christ is therefore putting his own imperfect human righteousness before God's perfect and holy throne. As a result, the holiness of God has no choice but to reject the unbeliever's imperfect righteousness and to condemn him forever to the lake of fire—a horrific place of indescribable eternal suffering, entirely devoid of hope (Rev. 20:15). (We will study God's holiness further in the next section of this study.)

Let us be clear: God does not delight in condemning anyone to hell, and He longs that everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). The Lord has allowed everyone the right to choose (through his or her own freewill) whether or not to accept the gift of salvation provided through Jesus Christ. Ultimately it is the unbeliever who rejects God's free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ (and therefore it is the unbeliever who *chooses* to be sent to hell, since this is the consequence of rejecting Christ). The Lord simply and painfully honors the decision that the unbeliever makes when he or she rejects God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Hence, the person who states that God is love and will not send

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1. The "Judgment of the Great White Throne" is the judgment for unbelievers who rejected Christ for their salvation. They are not judged for their sins, because Christ paid for all sins on the cross; however, unbelievers are judged for rejecting Christ's saving work on their behalf. This judgment occurs after the Millennial Reign of Christ and is for unbelievers only (Rev. 20:11-15, 21:8, 22:10-15). See the "Last Judgment" reference and the "Biblical Timeline" in appendix 2-3, pp. 40-42.

anyone to hell is (in fact) correct. The decision to spend eternity in the lake of fire is not made by God, but by the person who has decided to reject God's gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is imperative that we learn how to avoid the fate of hell; one's future will depend on it.

The Reason Christ is the Only Way

Without a doubt we have all heard about Jesus Christ at one time or another, and about how He died for the sins of the world. Unfortunately, not everyone fully grasps all of the mechanics involved, which would clarify why He is the only way to salvation. To further understand this, let us examine the essence of a person and the essence of God.

The essence of a person is that which makes up a person, and consists of all of his attributes. God's essence is made up of ten attributes, eight of which refer to his 'essence box', with the other two attributes (known as his holiness) guarding his essence box.[2] This holiness consists of the two attributes known as his righteousness and justice.

God's Essence Box

Sovereignty (supreme authority)	**Omniscience (all knowing)**
Love (unselfish, loyal concern)	**Omnipotence (all powerful)**
Eternal Life (without beginning or end)	**Immutability (unchanging)**
Omnipresence (present everywhere)	**Veracity (all truth)**

Perfect Righteousness (free from sin) **Perfect Justice (completely fair)**

Make up God's holiness and protect His other attributes.

To further understand God's holiness, let us consider God's perfect righteousness as his legislative attribute and his perfect justice as his judicial attribute. The legislative branch of any government in the world is the branch of that government responsible for composing the laws of the nation it governs. In other words, it is the group of individuals of that particular government who are in charge of making the laws. The judicial branch of a government, on the other hand, is the group of individuals that are in charge of enforcing the laws that are created by the legislative branch.

Therefore, in order for mankind to gain access to God's love, God's holiness had to first be satisfied. God's legislative attribute (known as His perfect righteousness) declares that for imperfect mankind to be united with a perfect God, man must be as perfect as God is, since God cannot be united

2. "The Attributes of God" are the attributes that make up God's essence. See Appendix 1, p. 38

with imperfection. To be able to approach His throne while alive (and to live before His throne after death) mankind must be as righteous as God is righteous.

For imperfect humanity to have access to God while in a state of imperfection would mean that God would cease to be perfect and would no longer be God. God's perfect righteousness declares that we, as imperfect sinners, come short of satisfying His perfect righteousness (Rom. 3:23). Since we do not possess a perfect righteousness that is in keeping with God's standards, God's judicial attribute of perfect justice is required to execute the penalty for our sin. This penalty is not just physical death, but death in the lake of fire after we die physically. God had to reconcile imperfect sinners with His perfect holiness, which (again) is made up of His righteousness and justice. Since God could not become imperfect as we are, He designed a plan that would declare us perfect like He is—a plan that we could freely accept or reject.

It is for this reason that the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ had to die on the cross as a substitute for us. As our substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ took the penalty of death that God’s holiness demanded for sin. He also took our imperfect righteousness on Himself and provides for us the only perfect righteousness that is acceptable to God. Only the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ is acceptable before the holiness of God and it is the perfect righteousness of Christ that is accredited to us when we accept it by faith.

In our study of salvation, we should keep in mind three biblical concepts established (and achieved) by Jesus Christ. These accomplishments include redemption, reconciliation and propitiation.

Redemption:

The first concept is that Jesus Christ redeems us, which connotes the idea of setting free or liberating by a payment of a ransom. The ransom that Christ paid was for our salvation, and was paid for not with corruptible things but with His very own precious blood:

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

Redemption addresses the problem of sin. The challenge was that God's holiness required a ransom of death, and that death is represented in the blood of Christ. The blood of Jesus Christ represented his sacrificial death on the cross. Christ liberates us by paying in full the debt of death that God's holiness demanded as the penalty for sin. It is through His ransom

that we are set free from the helpless, lost, and bondage state into which we are born. (Our lost condition is due to being born sinners with a sin nature—a sin nature which was imputed to us through Adam's original sin [Rom. 5:12].)

We are totally helpless in our state as sinners, and we are in need of a redeemer to purchase us out of the slave market of sin into which we are born. As God, Jesus Christ was not qualified to save us, because a qualified redeemer was required to be judged for sin, and to subsequently pay the ransom of death. Therefore as God, Jesus Christ could not have anything to do with sin, nor was He subject to death. On the other hand, in His humanity Christ was able to be judged and to pay the ransom of death for us through His sacrifice on the cross. This is why Jesus Christ, as the living Word, had to be born in human, fleshly form and dwell among us (John 1:1,14). As our redeemer, Jesus Christ paid our ransom with His blood, so that we might be reconciled with the holiness of God and restore the broken fellowship that our sin had caused.

Before moving on from this issue, let us examine briefly some of the qualifications that a redeemer was required to possess before being authorized to redeem. Referring back to the Old Testament, the first qualification of a redeemer was that he had to be nearest of kin or a nearest relative (Lev. 25:25, 48; Ruth 3:12-13). To fulfill this requirement, Christ entered the human race in the form of a human male:

> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.... (KJV Phil. 2:7)

The second qualification of a kinsman-redeemer was that he had to be free of any need for redemption himself. Unlike the high priest of the Old Testament (who first had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins and then offer one for the sins of the people), the Lord Jesus Christ did not need to sacrifice for His own sins since He was without sin:

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

The third condition that a kinsman-redeemer had to meet was that he must be willing to redeem. The Lord found joy in doing the will of the Father and He voluntarily gave up His life so that He could purchase (redeem) us out of our bondage of sin (John 10:17-18):

> Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I

> have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father. (KJV John 10:17-18)

Redemption was completed when the price was fully paid (Lev. 25:27). As we have already seen in 1 Peter 1:18-19, the price of our redemption has been paid in full by the precious blood of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is the only one capable of buying us back from the market of sin and repositioning us into a state of salvation.

Reconciliation:

The Greek word for 'reconciled' is *katallasso* and means 'to change completely'. The issue that this word addresses is not sin (as in redemption), but rather the condition of the sinner. As a result of Jesus Christ resolving our problem of sin through the ransom of His blood, our condition as sinners is now changed forever before the holiness of God. Our condition of broken fellowship with God's holiness due to sin is changed completely to one of restored fellowship. When we accept the sacrificial ransom of Jesus Christ on the cross, our position before the holiness of God is one of sinlessness and perfect righteousness. This is certainly a complete turnabout from our original helpless state of sin and imperfect righteousness. Again, Jesus Christ (and Jesus Christ alone) is the one who makes this possible as our kinsman-redeemer:

> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. (KJV Rom. 5:10)

By no means does reconciliation apply to God. As previously discussed, God is perfect and does not need to conform to us; we are the ones who need to change in order to conform to Him. And thanks to the grace of God, He has provided a redeemer in the Lord Jesus Christ to purchase us out of our lost state of sin and reconcile us to Himself.

Propitiation:

As a result of being redeemed from our sinful state and being reconciled to a new position, the holiness of God is now propitiated. Propitiation relates to the matter of atonement or appeasement of the holiness of God. Propitiation signifies that the Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied the holiness of God by His death on the cross. God's wrath manifested in a death sentence meted out to us because of our sin is turned away because Christ took that wrath of death for us on the cross. God did this in His immeasurable grace because He loved us so much; even while we

were yet sinners, He sent His uniquely born Son to die for us on the cross:

> And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (KJV 1 John 2:2)
>
> Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (KJV 1 John 4:10)
>
> Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through forbearance of God.... (KJV Rom. 3:25)
>
> But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (KJV Rom. 5:8)
>
> Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (KJV 1 Pet. 2:24)

We might note that the word 'propitiation' is found in the English Bible only three times. In Romans 3:25 the Greek word for 'propitiation' is *hilasterion* and is a reference to Jesus Christ as being 'the means by which sins are forgiven'. In 1 John 2:2 and 1 John 4:10 the word for 'propitiation' is the Greek word *hilasmos*, which also connotes that Christ is 'the means by which sins are forgiven'.

One more important verse to examine is Hebrews 9:5 where the Greek word *hilasterion* is once again used, but this time it is translated 'mercy seat'. The mercy seat of Hebrews 9:5 is referring to that of the Ark of the Covenant of the Old Testament.

A description of the Ark of the Covenant[3] is found in Exodus 25:10-22**.** The ark was a rectangular box made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. (The wood represented the humanity of Christ and the gold represented His deity.) Inside, the ark contained a gold jar of manna that represented the people's sin in rejecting the provision of God. The staff of Aaron that had budded (which represented sin in revolt against God's order) was also inside. The last items found inside the ark were two tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, which represented sin as it pertained to transgression of known divine laws.

The cover of the ark was called the mercy seat; it was also overlaid with gold. At each end of the mercy seat were two figures (both made of

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3. See the illustration of the "Ark of the Covenant" in Appendix 4, p. 43.

gold) with wings extended over the mercy seat (Heb. 9:5). These two figures were referred to as cherubs, and they represented the holiness of God. (As we have already seen, His holiness is comprised of His perfect righteousness and justice.)

The cherubs looked down at the mercy seat where the blood of the sacrificed animal had to be sprinkled as a temporary appeasement for the holiness of God. The sprinkling of the animal's blood represented the spiritual death of Jesus Christ bearing our sins. This foreshadowed the coming of Jesus Christ, who would obtain redemption once and for all by the shedding of His own blood (Heb. 9:12).

Thus the mercy seat is where the holiness of God meets sinful mankind; it is the place where sins are forgiven. It is the place where the holiness of God looks downward and sees the precious blood of Christ that covers our sins. Upon seeing the blood of Christ, the holiness of God the Father is satisfied or propitiated.

Christ satisfies the demand of death that the holiness of God requires. This explains why Jesus is the means by which our sins are forgiven. As a result, God's holiness is no longer compromised and is free to fully love and bless those who accept that Jesus Christ is the only means by which sins are forgiven. This is certainly the greatest gift that has ever been made available to anyone who is willing to accept it by faith.

Salvation is God's Gift to Mankind

Christ died and paid the penalty for every sin that we have ever committed and will ever commit in the future. Through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross we now have access to a perfect God. It is the Lord's work on the cross that saves us from spending eternity future in the lake of fire, and we can now be united with the Lord in heaven forever. This is the free gift that God has provided in His love to all who accept it by faith. This salvation is never based on what we do or don't do, but on the work that the Lord Jesus Christ did in dying on the cross to pay the penalty for our sinful imperfection. This wonderful truth is declared to be God's gift to mankind in Ephesians 2:8-9:

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

God the Father designed this perfect plan because it was the only way to reconcile imperfect and sinful humanity to His perfect person or essence. God the Son executed this plan when He came in human form to be the perfect sacrifice according to the plan (John 1:1-2,14). God the Holy Spirit is He who gives us the ability to understand this perfect and marvelous plan. God the Holy Spirit also makes it effective when we accept what the

Lord has done by faith (John 14:26).

In light of the fact that God has done all of the work in providing salvation to mankind through the person of Jesus Christ, the scriptures freely declare that salvation is now available to anyone who simply accepts it by faith. This unmerited favor from God is known as His grace. Although He should execute the judgment of death upon us given that we are sinners, He has instead (through His abundant grace) provided a solution to our predicament so that we can be in union with Him forever. The following scriptures declare this great news:

> And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. (KJV Acts 16:31)
>
> And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (KJV 2 Tim. 3:15)
>
> By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth…Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:10,12)
>
> But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many. (KJV Rom. 5:15)

Not only does God the Father impute Jesus Christ's perfect righteousness to us when we accept it by faith, Scripture also declares that we receive eternal life as well. The following scriptures reveal this fact:

> That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. (KJV John 3:15)
>
> For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (KJV Rom. 6:23)
>
> And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (KJV 1 John 5:11)
>
> These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (KJV 1 John 5:13)

We all have everlasting life, which is to say that we have a life that has a beginning but no end. We all had a beginning when we were born physically, but we will live everlastingly either in heaven or in hell, depending on whether we reject or accept Christ. The amazing facet of eternal life is that it never had a beginning, nor does it have an end, due to its self-sustaining nature. Referring back to the essence of God, eternal life is one of His attributes (meaning that God does not depend on anyone or anything to sustain Him). He is the source of life, and all life depends on God who has always existed. It is amazing that He loved us so much that He was willing to share His very own life force with those who would accept Jesus Christ by faith!

Spiritual Death is resolved through Christ

One of the problems that Jesus Christ resolved through salvation is the problem of spiritual death. To understand spiritual death, let us go back to the book of Genesis to examine Adam, our original human father. The Lord gave Adam a physical body when He formed him from the dust of the ground. After forming a physical body for Adam, the Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, which resulted in Adam receiving his human spirit along with his human soul (Gen. 2:7). This made Adam into what is known as a trichotomous human being, which simply means that he was composed of three parts: body, soul, and spirit.

As a consequence of the fall of Adam and Eve (which occurred after they disobeyed the order of God not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil), the couple suffered a spiritual death (Gen. 2:17, 3:6). As a result of their disobedience, our original parents experienced the consequence of spiritual death—they lost their human spirit and acquired a sin nature. This sin nature has been passed down to all humanity since the fall through the chromosomes of the father of every human offspring (Ps. 51:5).

There is one "exception to the rule" that all human offspring are born with a sin nature. This exception was the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Virgin Mary. God the Holy Spirit provided the twenty-three perfect chromosomes that were needed to conceive the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Matthew 1: 20 it is declared:

> But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. (KJV Matt. 1:20)

Although the Virgin Mary was indeed a virgin, Mary did possess a sin nature like the rest of us, for we are told in Romans 3:23 that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," including the Virgin Mary. (Whether evaluating the Virgin Mary, Moses, the Apostle Peter, the Apostle Paul or any one of us, we are all revealed to be sinners.)

The Apostle Paul gives us an account of his own struggles with sin in Roman 7:18-20**.** This is why Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11:1 that we should follow his example just as he follows the example of Christ. In other words, if we don't see him following the example of Christ, then we should not follow him because he also had a sin nature and was vulnerable to failures like the rest of us. Again, the only exception to this rule was the perfect humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is not to say that the Lord’s human will to choose was removed from Him in His humanity. In this sense it was possible for Him to choose to sin. However, He was unable to do so because His humanity could never be separated from His deity. In His deity, it was impossible for Him to sin. (Although Adam did not have a sin nature before the fall, he used his volition to sin, and as a result acquired a sin nature.) The Lord, on the other hand, used His volition not to sin and maintained His will in a state totally surrendered to the will of His Father.

This perfection was foreshadowed when God declared that He would set apart a perfect seed in woman (which would be necessary for the Lord’s virgin birth). God referred to this seed when addressing the serpent in Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The biblical reference to a “seed in woman” may seem crude and unsophisticated, but one can readily make the application to the human science of physiology. The process of meiosis and the destruction of polar bodies results in a woman's seed being uncontaminated prior to the time of fertilization. When it is time for the female ovum or egg cell to be released from the ovary, the ovum goes through a cell division, which reduces the number of chromosomes (the structures that pass on genetic information) to half their original number. This division is known as meiosis and results in the ovum discarding twenty-three contaminated chromosomes in the form of smaller cells known as polar bodies.

Through the disintegration of these non-functional polar bodies, unneeded cell matter is disposed of along with the contamination of the sin nature. This leaves one larger egg cell or ovum with the uncontaminated chromosomes which then grow in the ovary of a woman until the ovum reaches maturation. At maturation, the egg cell is carried to the fallopian tubes where it awaits fertilization by the male sperm cell. (This is the uncontaminated seed of woman that the Lord reserved in anticipation of the virgin birth of our Lord, referred to in Genesis 3:15).

However, since a sum total of forty-six chromosomes are required for conception, no woman is capable of conceiving life without fertilization by the male sperm cell. Twenty-three chromosomes are provided through the female egg cell and twenty-three by the male sperm cell to comprise the total of forty-six that are required for conception. The female ovum with the twenty-three uncontaminated chromosomes of the mother becomes contaminated at the time it is fertilized by the father's sperm cell, which is how the sin nature is passed on.

The result of this process is offspring born with a genetically-formed sin nature. (This trend began after Adam sinned and has caused all to be born in sin from that point onward.) Indeed, Romans 5:12 says that sin entered the world through one man, and that man was named Adam.

But just as God condemned all humanity through one man, He would also save all humanity through one man, the perfect Lord Jesus Christ. By condemning the human race on account of the original sin of Adam, the Lord is now free to save the human race on account of the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross. This is one of the reasons why the perfect justice of God is now able to automatically save small children (who might perhaps die before reaching the age of accountability), as well as the mentally challenged, due to the work of salvation from the Lord on the cross.

In the case of the birth of the Lord Jesus, God the Holy Spirit provided twenty-three uncontaminated chromosomes in place of the twenty-three contaminated ones that are usually provided by the male sperm cell of the human father. When God the Holy Spirit provided the twenty-three uncontaminated chromosomes required to fertilize the egg cell of the Virgin Mary, this satisfied the total of forty-six chromosomes required for conception of the Lord's perfect humanity. As a result, the Lord was born a perfect human being and without a sin nature. He was fully qualified to be the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. Indeed, the scriptures declare to us that Christ had no sin (2 Cor. 5:21) and that He appeared once and for all to do away with sin by the sacrifice of His own self (Heb. 9:26).

Without a doubt, the head of Satan was crushed in defeat through the work of salvation that the Lord completed on the cross (John 16:11). However, the Lord's saving work certainly didn't come without a price. The Lord was bruised by the suffering He endured. He went through more suffering because of the cross than we will ever comprehend. Isaiah 53:5 declares that He was bruised for our sins so that those who believe might have peace with God. In other words, He was wounded in order to satisfy the holiness of God, thereby liberating us from the condemnation to death we deserve:

> But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. (KJV Isa. 53:5)

It is Adam's original sin that has caused us all to be born spiritually dead with a sin nature. However, as I have already mentioned, through the Lord's saving work on the cross believers are able to regain the human spirit that was lost at the fall. God the Holy Spirit creates a human spirit at the moment we accept the Lord's saving work on the cross. This is what the Bible calls a spiritual birth (John 3:6):

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

Being born again is a spiritual birth, in which an individual is born not physically, but spiritually. The Lord tried to illuminate this concept to the Jewish teacher Nicodemus when He explained to him that no man would be able to see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again (John 3:3). Nicodemus did not understand that the Lord was referring to a spiritual birth and not a physical one. Being born again is simply the result of our belief in the salvation work of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and faith alone, which is what the Bible teaches (Gal. 2:16; Rom 5:1). As a result of our spiritual birth, we are told that we are now children of God (Galatians 3:26).

In the same manner by which we are born physically from the seed of our human parents, so likewise we are born spiritually from the seed of God into His family. Again, 1 Peter 1:23 confirms to us that believers are born again spiritually after hearing and accepting the gospel of the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Although it is God the Holy Spirit who makes this spiritual birth effective (Titus 3:5), it is the Word of God that presents the good news that Christ is the means to salvation for imperfect and sinful human beings. Thus we have been given the opportunity to accept or reject this message (James 1:18).

The following scriptures confirm that we are born again and justified by faith when we believe and accept the message of salvation through Jesus Christ:

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

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

> Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ… (KJV Rom. 5:1)

> For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (KJV Gal. 3:26)
>
> Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. (KJV 1 Pet. 1:23)
>
> Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. (KJV Titus 3:5)
>
> Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. (KJV James 1:18)

As we can see from the preceding verses highlighting salvation, the Bible emphasizes that we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ's saving work. It is not by the works that we do or don't do.

The human spirit that we obtain at spiritual birth is the immaterial part of us that is designed by God to convert, store and make use of spiritual phenomenon. God the Holy Spirit takes the doctrinal principles that we learn and store in our human spirit and gives us understanding so that we can believe and apply these principles to our lives (John 16:13). It is through the perception of, belief in (and application of) God's biblical principles stored in our human spirit that we are able to gain the divine wisdom known as God's wisdom.

The unbeliever, on the other hand, does not have a human spirit and is therefore incapable of understanding the things of God (we are told in 1 Corinthians 2:14 that the things of God are foolishness to him because he is unable to understand them). At the time the message of salvation is presented to the unbeliever, God the Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit to permit the unbeliever to understand the basis for salvation. In this way the justice of God provides every unbeliever with an equal opportunity to accept or to reject the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. The justice of God is perfect and will assure that everyone who has reached God-consciousness will have an opportunity to listen to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a result, each one will choose for or against the Gospel from his or her very own freewill.

Salvation is by Faith

We have concluded that Jesus Christ is the only perfect sacrifice that the holiness of God will ever accept. We have also looked at why we

are born in sin and why we must be condemned by God's perfect holiness. We have learned some of the marvelous benefits that are acquired at the moment we accept the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Although this discourse has reviewed some of the benefits a believer acquires through the spiritual birth (the aforementioned perfect righteousness, eternal life, human spirit and conversion into a child of God), there are many additional, excellent assets a believer comes to possess. Some of these other advantages are the indwelling of God the Father (John 14:23), God the Son (John 14:20) and God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:11). (I will eventually do a separate study on spiritual self-esteem that will include all of the assets the born again believer obtains the moment he or she accepts Jesus Christ and is born again spiritually. For now the benefits already outlined will suffice to show us a glimpse at the marvelous heritage the believer receives from the Lord through His abundant grace.)

The scriptures listed below confirm the indwelling presence of the trinity in the believer's life:

> Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (KJV John 14:23)
>
> At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. (KJV John 14:20)
>
> But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. (KJV Rom. 8:11)

The word 'faith' is translated from the Greek word *pistis* and signifies 'to trust, to believe, confidence'. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that faith is having confidence in what we hope for and being certain of what we cannot see. Faith is a system of perception that does not require merit from us but rather is based on confidence in the authority and truth of what God has revealed to us about Himself in His most precious Word. And His Word declares that Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved; in fact, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself states that He is the only way in John 14:6:

> Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (KJV John 14:6)

In salvation, faith represents a trusting belief or confidence that Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice that satisfies the holiness of God, and that Jesus has been sacrificed in our place. We are confident that we will dwell

in heaven in eternity future as a result of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Jesus Christ has all the merit in salvation; without His perfect sacrifice on the cross, we are doomed to remain in our helpless and imperfect state of sin (expecting condemnation to hell by the holiness of God).

When we have heard and understood this great news of the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, we simply have a trusting confidence in the message and accept it by faith. At that moment in time we are set apart into the family of God to await our future glory in heaven for all eternity, in union with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. That a gracious and loving God would do this for imperfect and sinful mankind is certainly a reason to shout for joy!

Salvation is secure Forever

As previously mentioned, at the moment we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior we are put in union with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; we also become children of God through the spiritual birth. Our saved position as children of God is permanent, and there is nothing that will ever alter that position (not even anything we do personally). In the same manner that a child of human parents will never cease to be the child of those parents, so also the born again believer will never cease to be a child of God and part of His family forever. In spite of what an earthly child does (even if he denies his parents), nothing will ever change the reality of that biological connection shared by those parents and child.

So likewise with our spiritual birth, nothing will ever change our spiritual connection with our heavenly Father. Our saved position never was dependent on what we did but on what Christ did, so there is nothing we can do on our part to lose that position. Paul tells us in Roman 8:38-39 that there is absolutely nothing that will ever separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. We should expect to receive our inheritance as obedient children of God, an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade and is kept in heaven for us (1 Pet. 1:3-4).

> 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. (KJV Rom. 8:38-39)

> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for

you. (KJV 1 Pet. 1:3-4)

This certainly does not give us a license to freely sin, but a responsibility to overcome our sin as born again children of God. Our obedience to the Lord should be a result of our saved position, although that obedience is not the means by which we are saved. We have already seen that it is Christ who has done all of the work for our salvation in redemption, reconciliation and propitiation. The Lord himself declared, "It is finished" after He had completed His saving work by dying on the cross for the sins of the world (John 19:30):

> When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (KJV John 19:30)

The word ‘finished’ in John 19:30 is translated from the Greek verb *tetelestai* and means ‘finish, complete, end, finalized or accomplish’. This verb is in the indicative mood, which is the mood of assertion. This mood is asserting the completion of the saving work of the Lord.

Tetelestai is also in the perfect tense and the passive voice. The perfect tense refers to a completed past action with an emphasis on the results of that particular action. The perfect tense of this verb is referring to the completed past action of the Lord's saving work on the cross with emphasis on the result of that work. (The result of the Lord's completed saving work continues today and is available to anyone who accepts it by faith.)

The passive voice signifies that another person is acting upon the subject. The subject was the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father was acting upon Jesus Christ when the Father imputed our sins to Him and judged them all.

Therefore, Jesus Christ has completed the work of salvation so that it would be available to all people. We should be careful not to adopt a state of arrogance by thinking that we can do something to lose our salvation, because salvation never depended on any works on our part to begin with. As we have seen, salvation is a gift of God from His grace and it does not derive from our works, in order that none of us should boast (Eph. 2:8-9).

Do we have to perform any manner of works after we receive a gift from our loved ones? Of course we don’t. We either accept their gift or we reject it, and this is also the case with God's gift to all mankind in His Son, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When we accept this gift of God by faith, it is credited to us and the Lord puts His seal of ownership on us as His children by the Holy Spirit, until the day of redemption (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13, 4:30).

For the believer, this day of redemption is not a spiritual redemption, because that occurred at salvation. The day of redemption for

believers is a future event when we will exchange this imperfect sinful body for a glorified body like that of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:21).

> Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (KJV 2 Cor. 1:22)
>
> In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise…. (KJV Eph. 1:13)
>
> And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV Eph. 4:30)
>
> Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. (KJV Phil. 3:21)

One last point to examine in regard to eternal security is found in Ephesians 2:8**.** The word 'saved' in this verse is composed of the verb participle *sesosmenoi* from *sozo* meaning 'to save, keep safe and sound, to preserve'. (A participle is a verbal adjective, meaning that it shares the characteristics of both verbs and adjectives.) In its verbal aspects *sesosmenoi* is in the perfect tense and passive voice. As previously indicated, the perfect tense describes an action that (while completed in the past) continues to have existing results in the present time. One could refer to this tense as a combination of the present and the aorist tense in that it denotes not only a completed past action of the aorist tense but the continuance of the present tense as well. The past action is when we exercised faith in Christ and the existing result is our present, continually saved state.

The passive voice lets us know that the subject receives the action of the verb. This indicates that the believer (at the point of placing faith in Jesus Christ) received the action of being saved. This action constitutes the forty things we receive at salvation (such as eternal life, perfect righteousness, and union with God the Son, God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit—just to name a few).

Paul, in order to emphasize the eternal security of the believer, actually used two verbal forms in this verse to provide a more forceful expression. Along with *sesosmenoi***,** he included the Greek verb *este*, which is translated 'are ye' (meaning 'be, exist, be located in, remain, stay'). The verb *este* is in the indicative mood, present tense and active voice. The indicative mood is used to described something that *is*, as opposed to something that *may* or *might be*. In other words, he is letting us know that we

are located in (or remain in) our saved position as a fact. The present tense also shows us that our eternally secure, saved position perpetually exists and will never change. Finally, the active voice expresses that the subject either performs, produces, or experiences the action or exists in the state expressed by the verb. Therefore in our case, the active voice involves the believer existing in the perpetual state of salvation.

Paul used the verb *este* to give duration to the continuous and eternal result of faith in Jesus Christ. This explains why the Lord stated that no one would pluck us out of His hand (not even ourselves) since salvation was never based on our works, but on His work on the cross (John 10:28-29). This is also why Paul states that it is, "not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9).

> And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (KJV John 10:28-29)

Some Misconceptions about Salvation

1. Not believing in God or in a place called hell.

Although a person may claim that it is rational or justifiable not to believe in God, the apostle Paul tells us otherwise. In Roman 1:20 he writes that no one has an excuse for not believing in God because all creation declares His person. As well, King David expressed a similar statement in Psalm 19:1:

> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head; so that they are without excuse…. (KJV Rom. 1:20)

> The heavens declare the glory of God**;** and the firmament showeth his handywork. (KJV Ps. 19:1)

These verses tell us that all created things are a testament to a higher creator and superior designer.

There is a complexity and a harmonized order in every aspect of nature. We have only to consider the incalculable diversity of life forms that inhabit the earth alone to formulate this conclusion. There is a vast number of species to consider, not only the quantity of species on land and sea, but the intricate world of microorganisms as well. We are sometimes not even

aware of the existence of these microorganisms because they are too small for the eye to see. Whether or not an organism is able to be viewed with the unaided human eye, all living things (from the microscopic to the largest) possess a complex structure that constitutes their form of being.

For example, the sophistication and precision of the human mind and body give us reason to marvel when examined in detail. Scientists tell us that there has yet to be a computer built that can rival the human brain. The most complicated computer in the world does not possess the imagination or creativity of the human mind.

In addition, our bodies are composed of complex microscopic cells that have unique functions. We have cells that maintain the rate and rhythm of the beating of the heart. The eyes have cells that perceive light. We have skin cells, muscle cells and nerve cells that carry out their respective functions within the framework of our bodies. Our organs are composed of cells as well, and each organ communicates with the other to maintain the body in a synchronized order without our conscious participation.

For example, let’s examine what occurs within our digestive system after a large meal is consumed. Because we need more blood to digest the food, our digestive system communicates with the cardiovascular system, resulting in the widening of blood vessels located in the digestive system (which then permits increased blood flow from the heart). Our digestive system then communicates with the nervous system, permitting the brain to receive impulses of nerves that communicate the increased workload. In return, the brain responds by registering a decrease in hunger and triggering an impulse to avoid vigorous activities.

It should be evident that the central aim of this section is to affirm that the complex and ordered structure of all living organisms points to the existence of a master designer/creator. Whether it is the complexity of living organisms or the perfect orbital paths maintained by the planets in our solar system, everything about creation manifests a harmoniously designed order. In fact, Webster's dictionary defines the cosmos as "an orderly harmonious systematic universe." This definition is wholly accurate, as there is a supreme designer and creator who has placed order within everything He has created.

Yet even with all of these signs declaring the existence of God, mankind theorizes that creation came into existence by chance through the process of evolution. The theory of evolution is based upon speculation, a theory which truly does require faith (albeit, faith that is misplaced). The probability that life occurred from a random set of circumstances is roughly equivalent to the probability that a pile of rocks and wood will evolve into a house of its own accord, or a pile of steel will spontaneously evolve into a car! In the same manner that we can look at a house or at a car and know that there was someone who designed and created that house or car, we can likewise look at all creation and know that there is a designer and creator responsible for everything created. Any scientist who is honest with himself

will concede that the probability of life coming into existence by chance is a mathematical impossibility. Some scientists have indeed realized the impossibility of such an occurrence.

The inherent or inborn inclination of mankind to worship a supreme being is also a testimony to the existence of God (Rom. 1:21-25). All cultures existing in the world, no matter how isolated they may be from the rest of civilization, have some form of worship directed toward a "higher power." This worship stems from mankind's observation of creation, and the entire created realm has testified to a creator. Therefore, creation testifies to the invisible essence of God in all He has created whether an individual wants to acknowledge this manifest certainty or not.

The author of this manuscript once had a person inquire as to how I could be assured that God existed since I had never seen Him nor had I ever touched Him. I simply posed a question to him in return, asking how he could be certain that someone had designed and created the building that was in front of where we were standing. This individual had never seen nor had he ever touched the person who had designed and built that particular building; however, he did not have any doubt that someone had indeed designed and built that building.

I asked him if the doors and the windows in that building had fallen into place by mere chance, or if the shingles on the roof had grown together in a straight alignment by coincidence. I then asked if he had seen or touched the person who had designed and created the computer in his home. The person stated that he did not have the slightest doubt that someone had built that computer. I asked him if the keys on the keyboard of his computer had come together by chance. I asked him if the steering wheel or the wheels on his car had joined themselves together randomly to complete the car that he drove. Before I could continue, he stopped me and simply said, "I get it."

For someone to observe all of the testimony provided by creation (evidence that points to the existence of a creator) and simply ignore this profound truth is itself a testament that the individual is divorced from reality. The Bible declares such person to be a fool (Ps 53:1):

> The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: There is none that doeth good. (KJV Ps. 53:1)

Indeed, we can know this all powerful and supreme God (the author of all creation) on a personal basis through what He has imparted to us in the completed Bible.

Now the Bible is very clear on a number of topics, including the subject of hell and that Jesus Christ is the only way to be saved from condemnation to hell. The critical issue, though, is whether the claims of the Bible are true or not. We can reason that if the Bible is truly the Word of

God, then the information conveyed concerning hell and Jesus Christ is factual; otherwise this revered book is just a series of fairy tales that we can summarily dismiss.

Let us consider some facts about the Bible that make this book distinct from any other book written in the history of mankind. It was composed during a 1,600-year span of time, throughout some forty or so generations. There is a sum of sixty-six separate books within the Bible, written by over forty authors. These individuals were amassed from virtually every social class spawned by society, and included peasants, kings, fishermen, and tax collectors.

Obviously many of these authors were never personally acquainted with one another (arising from different generations), and they wrote from three different continents during the 1,600-year timeframe.

However, regardless of all the variations in social, geographical and temporal characteristics, each one of these writers had harmonious concurrence regarding all of the subjects covered in the Bible. The consistent, main message throughout the entire Bible is one concerning the redemption of mankind, with Jesus Christ specified as the only means to that redemption.

In the same way that creation did not come about by chance, neither did this harmonious consistency of the Bible. It did not come about by chance because God guided and directed these human writers to expound His exact message to humanity without distorting each writer's unique personality or writing style. This is why the Bible can make the following claim that no other book in the world can make: the Bible is truly the Word of God. This momentous assertion is expressed in the following passages:

> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness… (KJV 2 Tim. 3:16)

> Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (KJV 2 Pet. 1:20-21)

We should note that there are other books considered to be sacred texts. However, unlike the Holy Bible these works have been authored by only one individual. In such cases where there is only one writer involved, the problem of dissimilarities among multiple contributors does not arise. For example, it is said that the Prophet Muhammad alone received revelations from God in the book of Islam, which is known as the Qur'an (Koran). There is no occasion for discord because there is only one writer involved.

In contrast, the Bible had over forty writers and did not have a

problem with uniformity. To have uniformity among forty disassociated writers about such controversial subjects as God, heaven, hell, the purpose of life, and salvation would be impossible unless God is, in fact, the true author. (It would be difficult to find agreement on such profound subjects with only six, five, four or even two people who know each other, and much more unlikely with forty people, many of whom have never met one another and/or have not even lived during the same generation.) But since God utilized human authors as His writing instruments, consistent agreement or uniformity was certainly not an impediment for the one who is perfect.

Uniformity among writers aside, is there historical and archaeological evidence that would prove the veracity of the Bible? The answer is "yes"; there is overwhelming corroboration. For someone to dismiss the historical and archaeological evidence of the Bible's accuracy simply demonstrates neglect in personally researching this area.

In the book by Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*,[4] the author states that "Archaeology has confirmed countless passages which have been rejected by critics as unhistorical or contradictory to known facts." The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus also provides historical accounts that verify the accuracy of the Bible. And in his writings about Christ and Christians in Rome, the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus has presented us with affirmative, historical accounts as well. These are just three men among many who have imparted such confirmatory narrative.

The historical and archaeological evidence with regard to the Bible, when examined in great detail, absolutely confirms the veracity of the Bible. The proofs are irrefutable because God is truly the author of the Bible, and ultimately the Bible always proves to be accurate because God is perfect and He does not make mistakes.

One last subject to consider that attests to the Bible being the authentic Word of God is prophecy. Consider that no other religious leader's existence has ever been foretold before his actual birth. This is what sets the Bible and Jesus Christ apart from any other book and person in human history. The Bible predicted precisely the future birth of Jesus Christ.

One prophecy about the future birth of Jesus Christ is given in Isaiah 7:14, which was written circa 700 B.C.:

> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (KJV Isa. 7:14)

This prophecy was fulfilled when Mary, who was still a virgin and had not yet married Joseph, conceived the humanity of Jesus Christ through

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4. Joseph P. Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, Wheaton, Illinois: Van Kempen Press, 1950, p. 13.

God the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18). (As previously discussed, it was God the Holy Spirit who provided the twenty-three uncontaminated male chromosomes needed for Mary to conceive the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.) Jesus was also called *Emmanuel*, which testifies to the deity of Jesus Christ, because in Hebrew this word signifies 'God with us' (Matt. 1:23).

After Joseph took Mary as his wife, he refrained from having sexual relations with her until after she had given birth to the humanity of the Lord, in order that she would remain a virgin until that time (Matt. 1:25). Note that the prophet Isaiah had penned this prophecy over seven hundred years before it occurred:

> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. (KJV Matt. 1:18)
>
> Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS. (KJV Matt. 1:23-25)

The book of Psalm also contains prophecies that were written hundreds of years before the time of Jesus, yet these prophecies were fulfilled precisely as they were written. The words of Psalm 22:1 "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" are uttered by the Lord on the cross when He was being judged for the sins of the world (Matt. 27:46).

One has to remember that the humanity of the Lord had always been in fellowship with God the Father until that moment. However, in that instant God the Father was judging the sins of the world by attributing them to the Lord Jesus. He had to abandon the humanity of the Lord because the holiness of God cannot have anything to do with sin. Thus the holiness of God abandoned the humanity of the Lord until all the sins of the world had been placed on Him and consequently judged.

> My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? (KJV Ps. 22:1)
>
> And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? (KJV Matt. 27:46)

Psalm 22 has also written in verse 8 the words "He trusted on the Lord that He would deliver him: Let Him deliver him, seeing He delighted in him." These words were fulfilled by the remarks uttered by religious leaders who were mocking the Lord while He hung on the cross in Matthew 27:43: "He trusted God; let Him deliver Him now…." Psalm 22 includes other prophecies, such as verse 18: "They part my garments among them, And cast lots upon my vesture." These words were fulfilled by the soldiers in John 19:23-24:

> Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did. (KJV John 19:23-24)

These are just four of several prophecies that were fulfilled exactly as foretold hundreds of years earlier. The chances of these four prophesies being fulfilled is astronomical, unless an omnipotent and omniscient God is indeed behind them. Therefore we can conclude that the manifestation of what was predicted in these examples is not merely coincidental. (In fact, the Bible is filled with prophecies that have come to pass or will come to pass in the future; they are not merely "lucky guesses" made by human writers.)

As we have often reiterated in this section, all of creation testifies to the existence of God, and God has revealed Himself to us through the Holy Bible. One of the central and critical themes of the Bible is how we can be saved from the place known as hell.

We can deny the reality of hell (and we can ultimately deny the existence of God as well), but our denial of His existence will not nullify the reality of God any more than we can cancel out the existence of gravity by merely stating that it does not exist. The person who denies the existence of God and the authority of the Bible does not have a basis for such a denial because the evidence for both is overwhelming. Such a person will not have anyone to blame but himself (or herself) for spending eternity in the lake of fire because that individual chose from his or her own freewill to reject the vast evidence the Lord has provided to all of us.

This treatise has covered a mere fraction of the evidence supporting the existence of God and the authenticity of the Bible. To encompass more evidence is a massive study in and of itself; since salvation is primarily the focus of this discourse, we have only briefly touched upon the subject of substantiation.

2. ***Just believing in the existence of God in general is sufficient to get into heaven because we are all His children; besides, a loving God would not send anyone to hell.***

As we have already seen, God has provided evidence in everything He has created as a testimony to His existence; therefore, each one who does not believe is without excuse (Rom. 1:20).

Let us not forget that Satan and his fallen angels believe in God; however, they will spend eternity future in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41). The book of James states that even demons believe in God and tremble (James 2:19):

> Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels…. (KJV Matt. 25:41)
>
> Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. (KJV James 2:19)

Therefore, possessing a general belief in God is not sufficient to make it into heaven; otherwise, Satan and the fallen angels would be there as well.

As previously mentioned, God is indeed a God of love, but He is also a holy God. It is that holiness that has to be satisfied before we can have access to His love. When we accept Jesus Christ (who died as a substitute for our sins) as our saving redeemer, we are declared to be children of God through the spiritual birth (Gal. 3:26). Jesus Christ certainly eliminated the universal fatherhood of God when He told the Jewish unbelievers that they belonged to their father, the Devil (John 8:44).

Undoubtedly the Bible does make a distinction between two groups of offspring. We may all be God's creation, but not all of us are children of God unless we are born again spiritually through faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross:

> For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (KJV Gal. 3:26)
>
> Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. (KJV John 8:44)

3. Striving for salvation on the basis of good works (such as keeping the Ten Commandments) is the means by which we attain salvation.

We have already seen in Ephesians 2:8-9 that salvation is a gracious gift from God to everyone who accepts it by faith, and not of any works that we should boast. This writer certainly hopes this point clarifies that the basis for salvation is Jesus Christ's saving work on the cross. The Ten Commandments served a purpose at the time they were given to the Jews, and they serve a purpose today as well; however, that purpose is not salvation.

The Jews were saved well before they were given the Ten Commandments. The basis for their salvation was the same as it is for us today, faith in Jesus Christ. Just as believers today look back at the sacrificial work of Jesus Christ on the cross, the believers of the Old Testament looked forward to the future work of Jesus Christ.

The Jewish believers of the Exodus generation were saved during the Passover from the plague of the firstborn (Exodus 11:1-10). This was the tenth and final plague that fell upon Egypt before Pharaoh finally ordered Moses and Aaron to take the Israelites and leave (Exodus 12:1-31).

God instructed the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb without defect and apply the blood to the sides and tops of the doorframes of houses where they ate the lamb (Exodus 12:3,5,7). The Lord explained through Moses that the blood of the lamb would serve as a sign for Him to pass over that house so that the destructive plague would not be visited upon the inhabitants (Exodus 12:13). At this point in time the Israelites had two choices to make. They could believe these instructions and follow them, or disbelieve the instructions and reject them. Those who believed the directive would not suffer the plague of the firstborn, and those who disbelieved would suffer this plague.

The sacrificial lamb was a shadow of Jesus Christ, for He is called the "Lamb of God" in John 1:29, and Peter tells us that the Lord was also without blemish or defect (1 Pet. 1:19). The blood represented the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:14), which God's holiness recognizes in the person who accepts it for his redemption. God's plague of condemnation to hell is passed over for those who have been covered with the redemptive blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, as in the Exodus generation and in our generation today, it is God's gracious mercy that provides salvation.

After the Lord saved the Israelites at the Passover, He saved the people from Pharaoh's army by parting the Red Sea so they could cross it (Exodus 13:17-15:21). The Red Sea crossing was a shadow of baptism, which occurs after a believer has accepted God's gift of salvation.

The subject of baptism is one that is sometimes misunderstood. While most people identify this word with water, the word ‘baptism’ actually

connotes the idea of identification (basically the identification or correlation of one thing with another, resulting in a change). A baptism of water is symbolic of the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

> For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (KJV 1 Cor. 12:13)

> For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (KJV Acts 1:5)

When we understand and accept Jesus Christ's work of redemption, reconciliation and propitiation on our behalf, God the Holy Spirit baptizes or sets us apart from our lost sinful position to our saved righteous position in Christ Jesus. We are then identified with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, and we are put into union with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ forever. (If we do not understand that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation and the only perfect sacrifice that the holiness of God will accept, then all the water baptisms in the world will not make any difference in our efforts to qualify for heaven.)[5]

Referring back to where this discourse left off in Old Testament history, we observe that once the Israelites had experienced Passover and crossed the Red Sea, they were given the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai. (The Ten Commandments—also referred to as the Decalogue—comprise the first of the three sections of the Law of Moses and are summarized in Exodus 20:1-17).

These commandments (which were used to establish boundaries for social behavior) applied to believers as well as unbelievers, with the exception of directives related to the worship of God. This author will elaborate a bit further below regarding the purpose of the Ten Commandments.

Most of us understand that without the establishment of laws in our country prohibiting stealing, murder, speeding, etc., our nation would descend into a state of chaos and unrestrained lawlessness. A country in such a state would certainly not survive very long. Likewise, the Israelites would not have survived long at all if the Lord had not given those statutes to maintain the protection of life, liberty and property within their nation.

However, national stability per se is not the whole intent of the Ten Commandments; the Lord is concerned with salvation. But before anyone is able to hear God's message of salvation (and either voluntarily accept or reject that message) the person must have been afforded the right to freely and peacefully exist. (For example, we are not living in freedom if someone

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[5] For a further explanation of the Baptism of the Spirit please see Appendix 5 on page 44.

murders us; therefore, murder needs to be against the law and applied to everyone regardless of belief status.) The establishment of a moral standard, prohibiting deleterious acts within a nation, makes that freedom possible.

While freedom is assured when the morality of a nation is secured through adherence to the first section of the Law of Moses, there is one important distinction to make. An unbeliever (someone who has freely rejected the message of salvation) can be just as moral as a believer. The difference is that the unbeliever will not be saved; morality (or virtuous behavior) without faith does not qualify one for salvation.

As we have seen, the Ten Commandments (also referred to as the 'freedom code') afford liberty to everyone in a nation so that each one may have an opportunity to eventually hear God's message of salvation. One is then able to choose for or against that message, according to his or her own freewill.

Old Testament Law was comprised of additional instructions other than those provided in the Ten Commandments. The second section of the Law of Moses includes ordinances or spiritual codes, and these are covered in Exodus 25:1 through Exodus 31:18.

We have to remember that during the period in history covered by the Old Testament, the completed Bible (as we know it today) was not yet in existence. Instead, God communicated His message of salvation through oral teachings and rituals. Whether it was the structure of the tabernacle and its furniture, the method of procedure of the Levitical priesthood, the description of the Holy Days or the meaning of the Levitical offerings, all of these things alluded to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For example, the animal that was sacrificed in the burnt offering was stipulated to be male and without defect. This offering was a shadow of the perfect humanity of the Lord. He became the reality that the burnt offering foretold when He was offered on the Cross once and for all for our sins (Heb. 7:27-28). This analogy served (and still serves) to enable believers to understand God's message of salvation.

The last section of the Law of Moses could be referred to as the establishment code and is covered in Exodus 21:1 through Exodus 23:9. The establishment code provided all of the principles that Israel needed to function properly as a nation. These tenets pertained to freedom, authority, privacy, and the rights and privileges of individuals living within that nation.

The establishment code also provided principles relative to military policy, taxes, marriage, divorce, diet, health, proper sanitation, and judicial and quarantine systems. (Again, such principles are requisite for the prosperity of any nation today just as they were in antiquity.)

The ten percent remittance requirement of the Old Testament was a system of taxation. The purpose of these taxes was to provide for the material needs of the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and the widowed (Deut. 26:12-13). This practice was much like the taxation system of our country today, which provides for the operation of our government and for the

provision of services for the populace.

In contrast, spiritual giving does not have a specified percentage. In the spiritual life of the believer, it is the motive behind the donation that is important, and not the quantity of the offering, as Paul tells us in the following scripture:

> Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. (KJV 2 Cor. 9:7)

A cursory analysis of these three sections comprising the Law of Moses should serve to dispense with the notion that the Ten Commandments alone cover the entire law of the Old Testament. As we have seen, the Law of Moses was more extensive than just the Ten Commandments.

However, as detailed and specific as the Law of Moses is, it is important to understand that the New Testament believer does not live under the law but under grace (Rom. 6:14). The intention of the law was never to save but to give an awareness and understanding of sin (Rom. 3:20). The law reveals to us that we are sinners, and this should prompt us to recognize our need for God to provide salvation, which He has granted us in His grace through Jesus Christ. We are all in need of salvation since all of us have sinned, and we have all come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:22-24):

> For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. (KJV Rom. 6:14)

> Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (KJV Rom. 3:20)

> Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.... (KJV Rom. 3:22-24)

We often have a tendency to focus exclusively on outward sins such as stealing, murder and sexual immorality while overlooking the mental sins we commit in our minds. We may feel smug or superior, having a false confidence in our own righteousness simply because we strive to avoid committing external acts of sin. However, the Lord spoke of such mental sins as greed, malice, deceit, envy, slander, and arrogance (Mark 7:22-23). Paul states in Galatians 5:4 that those who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ and that they have fallen far from grace.

Paul also goes on to list additional mental sins such as hatred, friction and selfish ambition in the latter part of the fifth chapter of the book of Galatians. (We have all hated, maligned, gossiped, argued and lied.) Lust alone has multiple categories, and does not solely include the sin of sexual lust. The sin of lust can also manifest as power lust, approbation lust, chemical lust or monetary lust.

It is when we begin to fully grasp the degree to which sin permeates our lives (manifesting in both inward and outward transgressions) that we realize just how helpless we are in our sinful state. It is then that we perceive God's grace and truly appreciate what He has done for us through the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

4. One is saved when he feels sorry for sin and invites Christ into his heart.

We usually associate the word 'repentance' with feeling sorry for our sins, and it is usually added as a condition for salvation. Therefore, a study of the biblical meaning of repentance is warranted as part of our study of salvation.

The Greek verb *metanoia* signifies 'a change of the mind, a conversion'. There may be sorrow involved, which may lead to repentance, but that sorrow itself is not repentance. In 2 Corinthians 7:10 the Apostle Paul writes "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation." Note that the sorrow was what led to repentance, but it was not the 'change of mind' that constituted the repentance itself.

When it comes to salvation the issue is always, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," as Paul told the jailer in Acts 16:31**.** The only sin that God the Holy Spirit condemns us of is the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ as the only way of salvation (John 16:8-9).

When God in His grace presents to us the good news that Jesus has died for us on the cross in order to redeem, reconcile and propitiate us, we then have two choices. We can either reject this good news or we can 'change our mind' about Jesus Christ because we now understand that He is the only perfect sacrifice that the holiness of God will accept, and without Him we are completely lost. It is the comprehension of this good news that leads us to 'change our mind' about Jesus Christ; we then simply believe this message for our salvation. The changing of our minds about Christ is what constitutes the repentance.

The other half of this fallacy (the belief that inviting Christ into your heart is a condition of salvation) has been taken from Revelation 3:20, where we read:

> Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup

with him, and he with me. (KJV Rev. 3:20)

This verse has been taken out of context to refer to an unbeliever opening the door to Christ and inviting Him in for salvation. To put it into the intended context, we must refer back two chapters prior to see where John receives instructions from the Lord as to who the actual recipients of the message were.

In Revelation 1:11 we are told that the recipients of the message were the believers in the seven churches at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. Revelation 3:20 is specifically directed at the believers in Laodicea as we can see from verse fourteen of the same chapter.

The believers at Laodicea had acquired wealth to the point at which they were taking pride and comfort in their riches as opposed to taking pride and comfort in the Lord (Rev. 3:17). Their focus on riches rendered them indifferent to the Lord, resulting in broken fellowship (Rev. 3:16). In Revelation 3:19 the Lord warns them to change their minds (to repent) of their indifference toward Him; if they refused, He would rebuke and discipline them. In Revelation 3:20 the Lord is telling these believers to remove the door of their sinfulness by using the confession technique of 1 John 1:9 in order that they might be restored to fellowship with the Lord.

Thus, Revelation 3:20 is an invitation to born again believers (of any era) who are out of fellowship to be restored back to fellowship with the Lord through 1 John 1:9. This verse in no wise refers to the unbeliever.

In the case of the unbeliever, the Lord is the one who does the inviting when He employs a conduit to communicate His great message of salvation to the unbelieving world**:**

> Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (KJV Matt. 11:28)

> And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of Life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. (KJV John 6:35)

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

The unbeliever cannot invite Christ into his or her heart because before God's glory can fellowship with someone, it must have a place to dwell. To further clarify this point, let us refer back to the Old Testament when God's glory dwelt in the tabernacle, specifically in the section of the tabernacle known as the Most Holy Place (Exodus 26:33).

Before God's glory could dwell with the Israelites, they had to construct a tabernacle where the glory of the Lord could dwell. (The

instructions for building the tabernacle are found in Exodus 25-30 and the actual construction is explained in Exodus 35-40.) Once this structure had been completed, the glory of the Lord could then dwell within the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-38).

Before God's glory can dwell within a person today, the New Testament tells us that a person has to hear and accept the message of salvation. The moment an individual accepts the truth that Christ is the only way to be saved, God the Holy Spirit creates a human spirit where God's glory can then dwell. (We have already covered this in the section that deals with the believer being born again spiritually.) The temple that the glory of God dwells in today is the body of every born again believer, as stated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19:

> Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (KJV 1 Cor. 3:16)
>
> What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (KJV 1 Cor. 6:19)

God is able to have fellowship with us as believers. We invite Him to do so when we confess any known sin through 1 John 1:9. On the other hand, the unbeliever cannot enjoy this fellowship until he or she has accepted God's gift of salvation and becomes a born again believer.

5. Committing to God and making Christ Lord is required for salvation.

We need to be careful not to make commitment a part of salvation. Commitment should be a result of salvation, but never a means for salvation. When Paul writes that we should present ourselves holy and acceptable to God by the renewal of our minds, he is speaking to believers (those who are already saved) about 'experiential sanctification' (Rom. 12:1-2).

The moment we accept Christ for our salvation we are born again into God's family; this is referred to as our 'positional sanctification'. After salvation we then have a responsibility to grow toward spiritual maturity by studying and applying God's Word. This maturation process is a conformation to the character of God and is known as 'experiential sanctification'.

In regard to making Christ our Lord, we are entered into union with His lordship the moment we are saved, and we are set apart into God's family by God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, He is our Lord whether we realize it or not. Jesus Christ is Lord now, He always has been Lord, and He will always be Lord. The critical issue is whether we will be united with Him by

accepting His work of salvation on the cross or not.

Conclusion

I certainly hope this study has given you sufficient insight into the wonderful salvation that God has provided in His love and infinite grace to all of humanity. God's marvelous gift of salvation (in the form of the perfect Lord and Savior Jesus Christ) is freely offered to anyone who will accept Him by faith. Let us not get caught up in the arrogance of thinking that we ourselves can add our own labors to God's finished work, lest we cancel God's grace (Rom. 4:14, 11:6).

Now that we have studied the good news of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done by providing salvation for us, all that remains for us to do is to "Believe on Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31)! This is the most important action (and the most important decision) that you will make in your life, because this decision will determine whether you will spend eternity future in heaven or in the lake of fire.

If you have never made this decision, it is yours to make right now. You can decide to ignore this marvelous message or you can resolve to accept God's gift of salvation in the person of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I sincerely hope that this study has clarified the issue of what God's gift of salvation really entails. I also hope that you now recognize that there is no other name under heaven by which we are saved except the name of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12):

> For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. (KJV Rom. 4:14)
>
> And if by grace then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. (KJV Rom. 11:6)
>
> Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (KJV Acts 4:12)

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God's Attributes

Scripture has given us ten attributes of God that express to us His essence or who He is. These ten attributes can be ascribed to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Although the three members of the Godhead are three distinct personalities, they are all one in essence, and that essence is expressed in these ten attributes. (There are additional scriptures for each attribute, but the references provided below should suffice for a basic foundation for each attribute.)

1. <u>SOVEREIGN</u> – 'Having created all things' signifies that all created things are subject to Him and thus owe obedience to Him; there is no higher authority than Sovereign God. We are told in 1 Chron. 29:11 "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all."

2. <u>LOVE</u> – This is the attribute most commonly ascribed to God. This quality motivates God to share His happiness and blessing with His creation. Love is the reason He made a way for imperfect mankind to be reunited with His perfect person through Jesus Christ. The apostle John declares in 1 John 4:8, "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

3. <u>ETERNAL LIFE</u> – God is the only one to whom this attribute can be ascribed since eternal life has never had a beginning and will never have an end. Although angels have been part of the universal landscape for ages, there was a time when they did not exist; therefore, they had a beginning—the point at which they came to exist. This does not apply to God since Isaiah 9:6 declares He is the "everlasting Father."

4. <u>OMNIPRESENCE</u> – Through this attribute we know that God is personally present everywhere. In other words, God in His wholeness is in every place, and He is everywhere at all times. The writer of Psalm 139:7-8 lets us know that by asking rhetorically "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."

5. <u>OMNISCIENCE</u> – This attribute expresses that God is all knowledge, meaning that there is no need for Him to learn anything since He knows all things (whether past, present or future). We are told in Acts 15:18 that "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world."

6. <u>OMNIPOTENCE</u> – This is the attribute that declares God's unlimited power; it is this power that will change our bodies into a form akin to the Lord's glorious body. Indeed, it is through this power that He is able "to

subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. 3:21)

7. <u>IMMUTABLE</u> – No creature or created thing can claim to be immutable (unalterable). Yet God is immutable, which means that He cannot change. This is why Malachi 3:6 declares, "For I am the Lord, I change not…." (As well, Heb. 13:8 states "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever.")

8. <u>VERACITY</u> – In His veracity God can only express what is true, and He is incapable of lying, as Numbers 23:19 tells us **"**God is not man, that he should lie….**"**

9. <u>PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS</u> – God is without sin and He is the sole source of supreme goodness in existence; hence, He is also perfectly righteous. In Psalm 50:6 it is stated that "…the heavens shall declare His righteousness…."

10. <u>PERFECT JUSTICE</u> – Being perfectly just, God is able to do what finite man can not, which is to always render perfect and just judgments. For this reason (and on the basis of what Christ has done on our behalf) 1 John 1:9 states "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Judgment of the Great White Throne

> And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. (KJV Rev. 20:11-15)

The Judgment of the Great White Throne mentioned in Revelation 20:11-15 is sometimes referred to as the second death or last judgment. This judgment applies only to the unbeliever, who will be under condemnation for rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior.

The rejection of Christ as Savior is the unpardonable sin that Christ could not and did not die for on the cross. This is why the Apostle John tells us in John 3:18 "He that believeth (accepts) on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not (rejects) is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." This is the one sin that God the Holy Spirit convicts the world of, per the following scripture**:**

> And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me…. (KJV John 16:8-9)

This judgment is considered the second death because not only will the unbeliever suffer a physical death, but he or she will also suffer a spiritual death consisting of total separation from God forever in the lake of fire. This spiritual death will occur when the unbeliever (resurrected from his or her physical death with a body of damnation) stands at the last judgment and is condemned to the lake of fire.

There will be two books opened at this judgment, the book of life and the book of works. The book of life will have only the names of believers, and the names of the unbelievers will be blotted out due to their rejection of Christ. The only book that will be relevant to the unbeliever will be the book of works. (This book will contain all the human works of the unbeliever and will only amount to human imperfect righteousness.) Remember that Christ was judged for *all* of the sin of the world, so only

human good works will be the issue at this judgment and not sin (I John 2:2):

> And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. (KJV 1 John 2:2)

Regardless of the number of good works an unbeliever can accomplish in his life, these works (when considered in their entirety) will only amount to relative imperfect human righteousness.

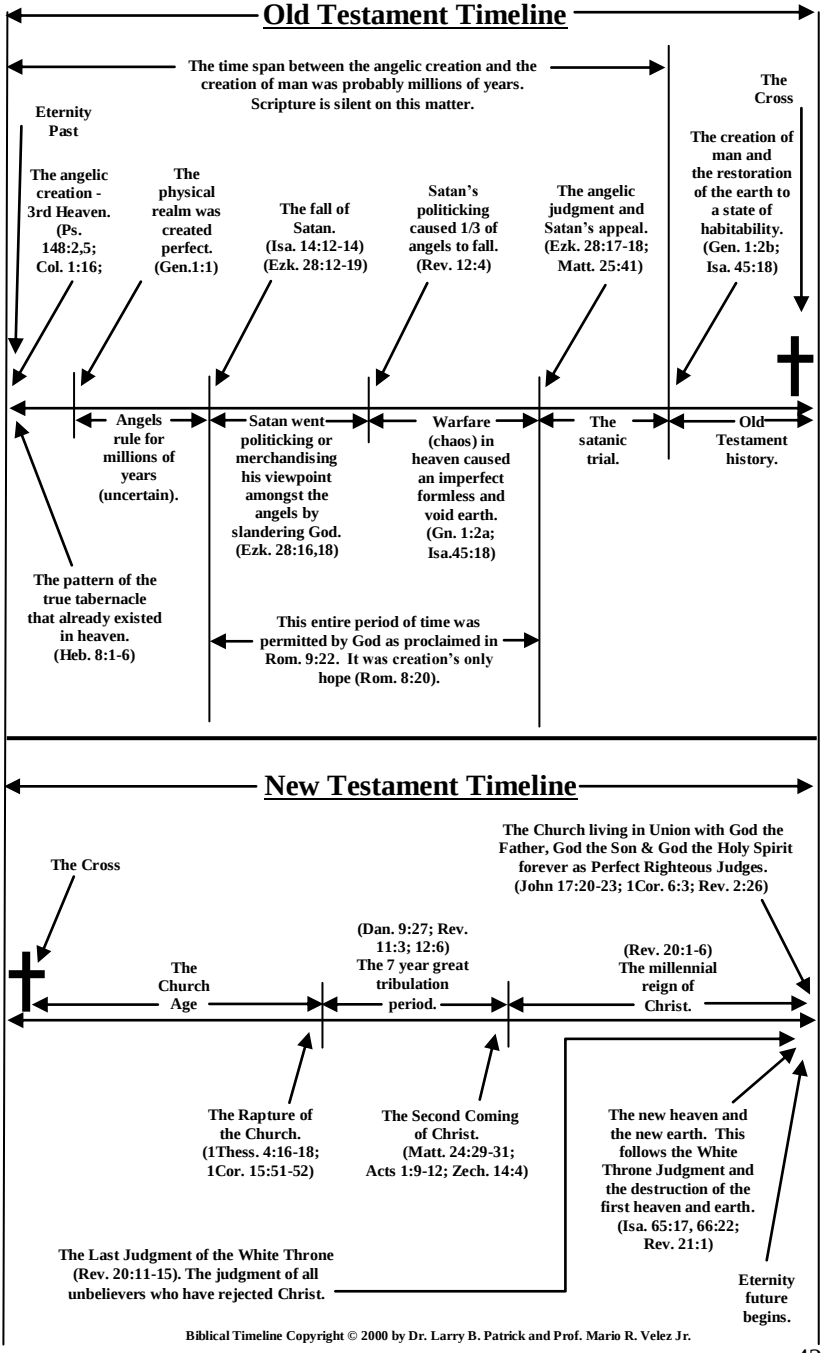
God's holiness is perfect and cannot have fellowship with anything less than perfect righteousness. Christ is the only one who can provide this perfect righteousness, and it is this perfect divine righteousness that is imputed to all believers at the moment they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. To live in union with God forever, we must not only have God's perfect righteousness but God's perfect eternal life as well. Christ provides both to anyone who will accept Him by faith.

The unbeliever does not possess perfect righteousness or eternal life. Therefore, it is the unbeliever's imperfect, self-righteous human works that serve as the basis for this last white throne judgment. (It is the pinnacle of arrogance to presume that we could possibly achieve the perfection that only Jesus Christ provides!) In essence, the unbeliever makes a conscious decision to stand on his or her own merit before the white throne instead of on Christ's saving work (as the unbeliever has rejected His gift of salvation). From his own freewill, the unbeliever makes the willful and unpardonable sin of unbelief in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, his condemnation to the lake of fire is a result of his *very own choice*. Such a choice seems tragically unwise and foolish when one considers that the merit for salvation lies in Jesus Christ alone, and all that remains for us to do is simply accept His finished saving work on the cross (John 3:36)**.**

> He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting (eternal) life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. (KJV John 3:36)

This last judgment of the white throne will be the final event that occurs before the Lord creates a new heaven and a new earth in order to prepare creation for the eternal state. This event will culminate God's biblical timeline of human history before the start of eternal history. The biblical timeline on the next page illustrates the events of God's timeline of history.

God's Biblical Timeline



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The Ark of the Covenant

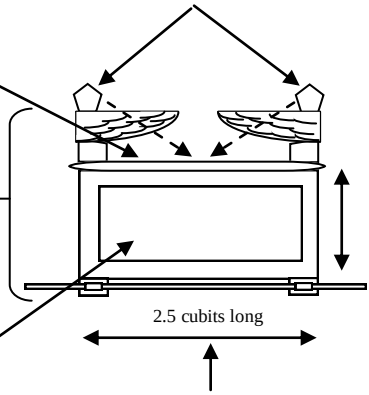
Ark of the Covenant

Exodus 25:10-22; 37:1-9

The Mercy Seat was where the blood of the sacrificed animal was placed. It was a covering to cover the two commandment stones, the pot of manna and Aaron's rod. These three items were a testimony that all had broken God's law, order and rejected His provision.

The two cherubim that represented God's perfect Righteousness and Justice. They looked down at the Mercy Seat. The blood covered over creation's sinfulness and appeased God's Holiness.

Significance of the Material: The wood represented the Humanity of Christ and the Gold His Deity. The Church will be part of this union in eternity future (Jn. 17:20-23).



The Ark contained within it the two tablets with the Ten Commandments representing sin in the sense of transgression of known divine laws. The Pot of Manna represented sin as rejection of God's provision & Aaron's rod that budded represented sin in revolt against God's order. The blood on the Mercy Seat covered over these sins & canceled God's wrath for His mercy.

The significance of its measurements:
Width: 2.5x2 = 5 (# for Grace) Height: 1.5x2 = 3 (# for Perfection)
Measurements around end: 1.5+1.5+1.5+1.5 = 6 (# for Man)
Measurements around top: 2.5+1.5+2.5+1.5 = 8 (# for Resurrection)
Measurements of two ends: 6+6 = 12 (# for Governmental Perfection)

Like the Israelites in the Old Testament, we have all broken God's law, provision & order and have come short of His Glory because our sinful imperfections (Rom. 3:23). The two cherubim looking down on the mercy-seat represented God's Holiness or Perfect Righteousness and Justice looking down on our sinful imperfection. The mercy-seat was where the blood of the sacrificed animal was placed in order to appease God's Judgment on sinful Israel. The blood represented the death that God's Holiness demanded as judgment. Likewise, Jesus Christ's blood on the Cross is the only thing that covers us and is between our imperfect sinfulness and God's Holiness. Christ's blood represented the sacrificial work on the Cross that is the basis for appeasing God's Holiness. As a result, Christ as our Mercy-Seat changes God's throne from a throne judgment to a throne of grace. The number 5 speaks of God's grace to man (#6). Thanks to the grace of Perfect God (#3) we can have a resurrection (#8) because Christ's blood covers our sinfulness unto a future perfect government (#12) in eternity future that will be made of church age believers.

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The One Baptism

> And as they went on their way, they came unto certain water: and the eunuch said "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. (Acts 8:36-38)

Christian baptism was the water baptism of the believer according to Acts 8:36-38. Yet, this was a ritual that was a teaching aid to teach the baptism of the Holy Spirit before the completion of the New Testament cannon of scripture. Therefore, water baptism was a ritual that was a teaching tool, however its intent was for this transitional pre-cannon period of the Church Age. The completion of the Bible came about with the completion of the Book of Revelation by the Apostle John in circa A.D. 96.

In the same manner that all the spectacular and miraculous-type temporary spiritual gifts ceased with the completion of the Bible as we have it today, the same is true with the ritual of water baptism. During this transitional period the only two rituals that were in operation was that of communion and water baptism.

During this pre-cannon period of the Church Age, water baptism was a ritual that emphasized the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The baptism of the Spirit is unique to the Church Age only. Submerging a believer under water was part of water baptism and was a teaching aid to teach a believer of their identification with Christ in His death and burial. Coming out of the water taught about a believer's identification with Christ in His resurrection, ascension, and session. In essence, it was a believer's way of acknowledging the doctrinal truth about the Baptism of the Spirit. Remember that the doctrinal truth of the Baptism of the Spirit had yet to become part of the cannon of Scripture.

A believer's acknowledgment of this truth included that the believer is a new spiritual species, in addition to being part of the body of Christ, and part of the royal family of God. All these doctrinal truths are now in a complete form as found in the pages of Scripture and are available for believers to learn all about these realities that they have in Christ. Since we can now understand the reality of the baptism of the Holy Spirit from the pages of Scripture, the ritual of water baptism is no longer necessary as a teaching tool. Water does not and cannot do anything whatsoever for the spiritual life of a believer in the saving work of Jesus Christ.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a real baptism whereby God the Holy Spirit enters a new believer into union with Christ the moment they accept Christ as their personal Savior. The royal family of God is forming

during our present Church Age through this real baptism of the Holy Spirit. Our adoption as God's royal family and new spiritual species is a result of the function of the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit. Our union with Christ through the baptism of the Holy Spirit is what is known as positional sanctification. The many references to positional sanctification or the baptism of the Holy Spirit are often seen in the Greek prepositional phrase *en* plus the locative of *Christos*, translated in our Bible as "in Christ." The use of this phrase is a technical reference to the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the resultant positional truth, in many places in Scripture. The exception to this is the phrase "believing in Christ" which has a different meaning.

By no means is the baptism of the Holy Spirit an experience as some groups erroneously teach in some religious circles. Again, it is simply the function of the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit permanently placing every believer into union with Christ, making him a new spiritual species. This is the one and only baptism that unifies the royal family of God according to the teaching of our now completed New Testament Scripture (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 6:3; Eph. 4:5).

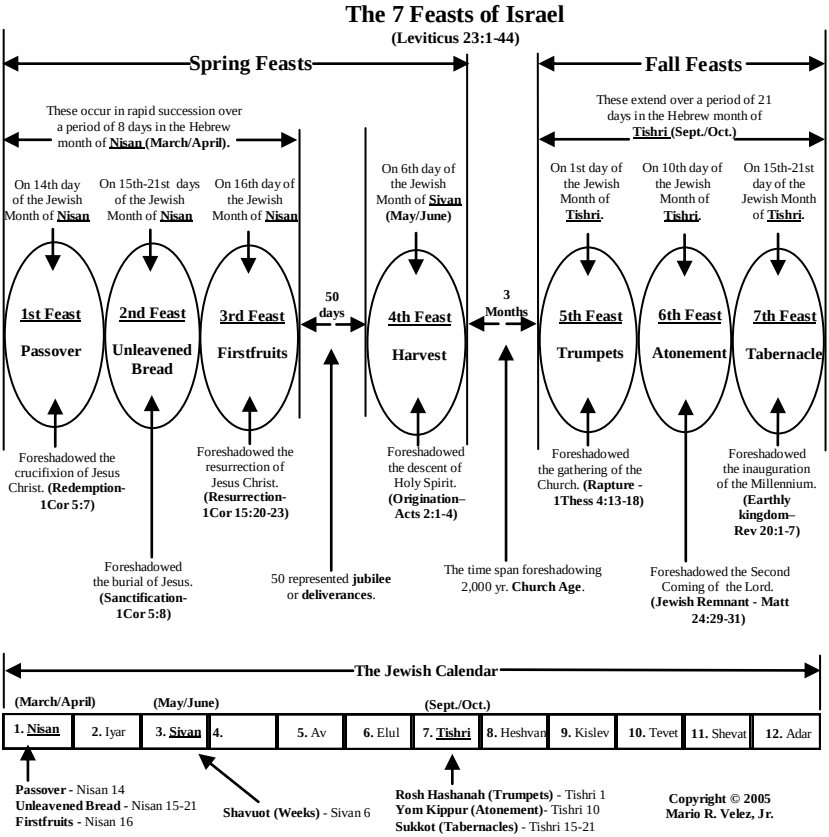
> For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (KJV 1 Co. 12:13)
>
> Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? (KJV Rom. 6:3)
>
> One Lord, one faith, one baptism, (KJV Eph. 4:5)

Notice that Ephesians 4:5 teaches that we have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. This one baptism is the baptism of the Spirit, the act of the Spirit when He places the believing sinner into the body of Christ at conversion.

There are those who teach inaccurately that the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist is the precedence for water baptism today. Yet, the baptism of the Lord by John represented the Lord's identification with God the Father's will, plan, and purpose for His next three years of His ministry. When the Baptist submerged our Lord under the water of the River Jordan, the act shows His positive volition toward the Father's plan for His last three vital years on earth. The Lord coming out of the water was a picture of His resurrection. Yet, the Lord himself before His ascension said to the disciples in Acts 1:5, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." The word "but" in Acts 1:5 teaches a contrast between the ritual baptism of John the Baptist and the real baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It is unfortunate that many today, as well as many throughout the Church Age have not seen or acknowledge this contrast. The propagation of water baptism continues today, all the while, misunderstanding of the reality of the baptism of God the Holy Spirit reigns supreme.

The Seven Feasts of Israel



Summation of the Seven Feasts

PASSOVER **foreshadowed the Lord's crucifixion -** The Lord reminds His disciples in Matthew that the "feast of Passover" was two days away, at which time He would be crucified. The religious leaders had plotted to kill the Lord after the Passover when the people, who had journeyed to Jerusalem for the feast, had already departed. Yet God allowed this event to occur on His timing, and not on the timing of the religious leaders (Matt. 26:1-5). This is why Christ is called 'our Passover Lamb' (1 Cor. 5:7).

UNLEAVENED BREAD **foreshadowed the Lord's burial -** Although Mark 14:12 states that the Lord's Supper occurred on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, we have to note that Mark states it happened "when they killed the Passover." The Passover lambs were killed on the fourteenth day of Nisan, which was when the Passover Feast was celebrated. The next day, the fifteenth day of Nisan, was when the seven-day Feast of

Unleavened Bread began. For this reason, Passover and Unleavened Bread are often intermingled together and collectively referred to as "the eight days of Passover." It was also common at the time to refer to this eight-day period as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

It was on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (fifteenth of Nisan) that the Lord was in the grave. He did not see decay because He was pure and sinless, without leaven. That the Lord would not see physical decay was prophesied by David and quoted by Peter in Acts (Ps. 16:8-10; Acts 2:25-28). Thus, Christ was the fulfillment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

FIRSTFRUITS **foreshadowed the Lord's Resurrection -** In line with God's timing, the Lord was resurrected on the sixteenth of Nisan, when the feast of Firstfruits was celebrated (two days after the beginning of Passover). In these first three feasts we are able to see the three days that the Lord taught about; the third day would be when He would rise again from the grave (Mark 8:31). Christ fulfilled this feast in that He was the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20).

THE FEAST OF HARVEST **or** ***WEEKS*** **foreshadowed the descent of the Holy Spirit –** The fulfillment of this feast is documented in the second chapter of the book of Acts**.** The Feast of Harvest is also designated the Feast of Pentecost, and it was on this feast day that the Holy Spirit descended on all believers, inaugurating the church age.

Through the analysis of these four spring festivals we see a depiction of the redemptive work of the Lord's First Coming. Likewise, the last three fall feasts depict three events that have yet to be fulfilled and are correlated with our Lord's Second Coming. From the model God has left us in the four spring feasts, we can conclude that the future events foreshadowed by the three fall feasts will occur precisely on the schedule associated with each fall feast.

The first of the fall feasts is the Feast of Trumpets, also known as Rosh Hashanah, which is celebrated on the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishri at the New Moon. Just as the Feast of Pentecost began the church age, the Feast of Trumpets will signal the end of the church age when the Lord will rapture His church (1 Thess. 4:13-18). Nine days later, on the tenth day of Tishri, the next feast (referred to as "The Day of Atonement") is celebrated. The Day of Atonement points to those of the tribulation who will be saved when they see the Lord physically returning to the earth (Matt. 24:29-31; Acts 1:9-12; Zech. 14:4).

The last feast is referred to as the "Feast of Tabernacles," which is a seven-day celebration occurring from the fifteenth day through the twenty-first day of the month of Tishri. Tabernacles foreshadowed the millennial reign of our Lord spoken about in the book of Revelation (Rev. 20:1-6).

Notes