

Fellowship with God

Volume Two

More doctrinal expositions with applications
to the spiritual life of the Christian believer

Fellowship with God, Volume Two

Written by Max Klein

Arranged and Edited by Tim Mclachlan

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or contact us via post:

P.O Box 319, C.P.O., Chiangmai, Thailand 50000

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The author has studied under the teaching ministry of R. B. Thieme Jr., his faithful pastor for over 30 years. During that time Max has learned many biblical principles and doctrinal truths which have given him a clear understanding of the spiritual life. It is this spiritual life that Max desires to explain in simple written form.

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Preface

Before you begin your Bible study, if you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, be sure you have named your sins privately to God the Father.

“If we confess our [known] sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our [known] sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

You will then be in fellowship with God, filled with the Holy Spirit, and ready to learn Bible doctrine from the word of God.

“God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in [the filling of] the Spirit and [Biblical] truth.” (John 4:24)

If you have never personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, the issue is not naming your sins. The issue is faith alone in Christ alone.

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey [the command to believe in] the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him.” (John 3:36)

The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12)

All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be mature, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. 2:15)

Hebrews 10:25

Assemble to be encouraged by the Word

Hebrews 10:25 “Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as is the habit of certain ones, but for the purpose of encouragement [from the Word of God] , even so much the more, as you see the day (the resurrection of the Church/ the Rapture) approaching.”

Today, the Church building is generally where Christians gather to worship the Lord through their prayers, hymns, concentration on the teaching of the Word, and participation in Communion Service. In the first two hundred years of the Church age there were no church buildings. Usually, believers met in homes to worship the Lord. This was quite alright for it doesn't make any difference whether the pastor conducts the worship service in a home, office building or an ecclesiastical structure. Correct worship and spiritual growth does not depend on the type of building, but on the qualification of the pastor. Through the accurate teaching of a qualified pastor the members of the congregation will come to accept the pastor's authority. If they listen to him consistently, they will grow spiritually.

How far a member is seated from the pastor is not the issue. Whether he is seated fifteen feet in front of the pastor or fifteen thousand miles from him in his home makes no difference. What is important is this: does he accept the pastor's authority; and does he listen consistently to him? The pastor can communicate to his congregation through a number of ways including face to face communication, printed materials, audio or video tape, email, or other electronic media such as radio, and television for example. Distance is not the issue.

One does not have to attend a Church in the same geographical area of his residence. In many geographical areas there are no pastors qualified to teach and explain the spiritual life. If a Christian had to attend a Church in such an area, he would have no hope of spiritual growth. What if you were attending a Church in your hometown under the ministry of a prepared minister who explained the spiritual life well. Suddenly you become very

sick and are taken to a hospital in a distant city where you will have to stay for a whole year. Now, you have a choice of either attending the chapel services in the hospital or receiving Biblical instruction on tape from your pastor in your home town. Let's also assume that the minister conducting the chapel service knows nothing about the spiritual life, so that listening to his teaching would be a total waste of time. What should you do? Should you attend the chapel services in the hospital and destroy your spiritual life, or should you listen to your pastor's tapes and continue to grow spiritually?

What if someone had to work in a foreign country where there were no pastors? Obviously, he and his family would not be able to listen in the presence of a pastor. They would have to receive Biblical instruction from a pastor from another country, and since they would not be able to attend a local Church, the father would be responsible for organizing a time for family Bible study, prayer, the singing of hymns and the conducting of the communion service.

The assembly of believers in a church must emphasize perception, metabolization, and application of doctrine*. Friendship and fellowship with other believers is optional; it is never mandatory. This passage from Hebrews is usually misunderstood because two words have been added to many translations that are not in the original language. The Greek does not say that you should *encourage one another*. The words *one another* do not exist in the Greek. The Greek word παρακαλεω / *parakaleo* is a Telic Participle and should be translated "for the purpose of encouragement". Why do we assemble? We assemble to be encouraged from hearing and learning God's word.

*A glossary of terms appears on page ?

It is true that sometimes fellowship with other believers can be encouraging, but this fellowship is not the source of encouragement. Occasionally, a believer may associate with a mature believer and be encouraged by him because he expresses divine viewpoint. It is always divine thinking and expression that is encouraging, not social life or the subjective viewpoint of other believers.

In most cases socializing with carnal Christians will distract believers from the spiritual life and can be counter productive for the following reasons:

1. One establishes wrong priorities in the Christian life through the influence of believers in a state of reversion; that is, ignorant and confused Christians who do not learn or execute the spiritual life. If you associate with Christians who are ignorant of God's plan, they will affect you with their ignorance. If you associate with Christians who are always controlled by their sin nature, they will have a negative influence on you.

2. Many believers are distracted from learning and applying Bible doctrine because of their preoccupation with friendship, romance, or marriage. A good relationship with God must be established before one can have a good relationship with people. Unfortunately, people who are preoccupied with people never develop a good relationship with God.

3. If you associate with legalistic believers (believers adhering to a pseudo spirituality), you must either follow their legalism or be condemned by them. If you associate with believers who claim that the spiritual life is a series of commandments such as: don't drink, smoke, dance or go to movie theaters, then you either must accept their system of pseudo spirituality or be in conflict with them. In either case, this association with them will probably place you out of fellowship.

4. If you associate with antinomian Christians, you will likely become antinomian (an antinomian is a believer who abuses God's gift of salvation by refusing to change his immoral behavior). If you associate with those who consistently drink heavily, fornicate or are involved in criminality, then you also will eventually be influenced by this type of behavior. The type of people we associate with definitely has an influence on us. Can you put a hot coal in your pocket and not get burned?

5. Some Christians use other Christians as a means of advancing themselves in their career or business. These people attend a church where

there are influential believers who can help them fulfill their lust of inordinate ambition and competition. Obviously, social life with these believers will have a huge negative impact on your spiritual life.

6. Many Christians substitute social life with other believers for fellowship with God. True Christian fellowship is fellowship with God, not with people. If you have five hundred Christian friends, and you perform many acts of Christian service with them, yet do not love God, you are nothing and you accomplish nothing. (1 Cor. 13:1-3).

Generally, when we sit down in some location to learn God's word, we do so with other Christians. That is what this passage is saying. However, having others sit down around you as you learn the Word does not contribute to your spiritual growth. Whether you sit in your home with family members to listen to your pastor via television or radio, or attend a large church and are surrounded by a thousand other believers makes no difference. People cannot cause you to grow spiritually; it is the message that causes your spiritual growth.

Some Christians think that walking into a church automatically makes them spiritual. If a believer attends a church where the pastor is totally ignorant of the spiritual life, that believer has no chance of learning the spiritual life and therefore no opportunity to worship God correctly. Worse yet, since that pastor does not understand the spiritual life, he will teach a pseudo spiritual life. In effect, by attending that church, the Christian goes backward in his spiritual life. This concept may be understood by analogy: if a person studies engineering under a professor who is totally ignorant of the correct principles of engineering, that student will learn false information about engineering. Before beginning his studies, the student was just ignorant of the true principles of engineering, but now he has also acquired false principles. He is actually worse than he was before, because now he is not only ignorant, but also arrogant. He thinks he understands engineering, and therefore will not even listen to a good professor. This is what happens to Christians when they attend a church where the pastor is ignorant regarding the spiritual life. They think they understand the spiritual life; they think they are growing spiritually, but in reality they have gone backwards in their spiritual life and have become very arrogant.

This passage from Hebrews is not commanding Christians to attend the nearest geographical Church building where the pastor is allegedly teaching the Word. This passage is commanding all believers to learn the Word of God consistently from a qualified pastor, a qualified spiritual professor. “But grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 3:18). Growth does not come through interaction with other believers. Growth does not come through sitting next to another believer in a church. “So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the communicative word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). The spiritual life is not developed through seeing your pastor in a local church, but rather through hearing his message. Your faith is not increased through social life with other Christians, rather through hearing the accurate message of a prepared pastor.

The Filling of the Holy Spirit: Spirituality

In order to understand the Filling of the Holy Spirit, we must distinguish between the Filling of the Spirit and the Indwelling of the Spirit. Simply stated, the Filling of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit controlling the soul, whereas the indwelling of the Spirit is the Holy Spirit indwelling the body (1 Cor. 3:16). When we are filled with the Spirit, the Holy Spirit provides the power for the believer to understand, metabolize, recall and apply Bible doctrine to his experience (John 14:26, 1 Cor. 2:10-12, Gal. 5:22,23). On the other hand the purpose of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is to make the believer's body a temple for the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:20) and God the Father (Eph. 4:6).

“Stop being intoxicated with wine by which is dissipation, but keep on being filled [controlled] with the Holy Spirit.” (Eph. 5:18)

This is an analogy by antithesis. When the Christian is consistently filled with the Holy Spirit and learning doctrine, he fills his soul with doctrine. From this doctrine he develops wisdom and a clear purpose for life. However, when a Christian functions out of fellowship for a long period of time, he will receive false concepts into his soul which leads to false values and a dependence on wrong things, resulting in a degenerate lifestyle. You see, when a Christian is not learning true doctrine under the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit, he will drink from the wine of false doctrine (Eph. 4:17-19). Thus, he will become intoxicated with false motivation, priorities, thinking and action. His spiritual life will become disorderly; his vision will become blurred and he will stumble his way through life.

There are two powers in the spiritual life. One is the power of the Holy Spirit, who provides his power by the filling of the Holy Spirit so that we can execute the spiritual life. We have also been provided with the Word of God, which is alive and powerful. However, the Word of God is of no use to the

believer until it has been inculcated in the soul, where it is stored in the memory and recalled at the right time by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). There is no substitute for being filled with the Holy Spirit and having the Word of God stored in the soul. These are the two powers that make the Christian strong in his soul.

“That he may give you, on the basis of the riches of his glory [these are the wonderful assets which God has provided for the believer in the Church Age], to become strong by means of power through his Spirit in your inner man.” (Eph. 3:16)

This is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit metabolizing doctrine in the soul of the believer. From this strength in his soul, the believer is able to handle any pressure or adversity in life.

Spirituality and spiritual growth must be distinguished

Spirituality is an absolute. A believer is either filled with the Spirit or not. John describes these two conditions of spirituality as the believer who is either walking in the light, or walking in darkness (1 John 1:5-7). We may be spiritual one moment, but as soon as we commit a mental, verbal or overt sin, we are no longer spiritual, but out of fellowship. Once we are out of fellowship the only way we can recover our spirituality is to name our sins correctly to God the Father (1 John 1:9).*

* See *Fellowship with God, Volume 1*, p7-11

Some things in the spiritual life are relative, other things are absolutes. Spiritual growth is relative. In the church, believers are at different levels of growth: baby believers (1Pet. 2:2); adults who love their own soul and have achieved a personal sense of destiny (Pr. 19:8; Phil. 4:11-13); and mature believers who love God (John 14:15; Rom. 8:28; Jam. 1:12). Fellowship is an absolute. One is either in fellowship with God or not. A baby Christian may be in fellowship or out of fellowship with God at any given point in his life. The same is true of the adult and mature believer.

A baby Christian may be in fellowship with God (have the filling of the Holy Spirit), while the mature believer may be out of fellowship. David was a very advanced believer when he committed adultery and murder. From his example we have this principle: when a believer gets himself out of fellowship he is capable of committing any sin that an unbeliever can commit.

Human age does not determine spiritual growth. Just because an 80 year old person has been attending a church for 60 years does not imply that he is a spiritual giant. Spiritual growth is determined by one's humility and the amount of Biblical truth metabolized in his soul. If a Christian has just a small amount of metabolized doctrine in his stream of consciousness, he is a baby Christian. If he has listened to accurate teachings of Bible doctrine consistently for many years so that he understands God's plan very well and has developed spiritual self esteem, he would be classified as an adult. If he has reached the level of loving God, obeying all the commands of scripture (John 14:15), he is a mature believer. He could be 19 and a mature believer.

Humility must be established in the soul. It is developed first in the unbeliever obeying God's laws of establishment, and later developed by the Christian who continues to obey these laws and also advances in the spiritual life. Humility is an essential commodity/ factor/element in life.

It is also essential to understand that spiritual growth does not come through Christian service, singing, praying or giving, but through humility and ones understanding of God's Word: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). Christian service, singing, praying and giving may be the result of spiritual growth, but they are not the means to spiritual growth.

Singing hymns may be a form of worship provided that the believer is in fellowship and singing a hymn that is accurate and honoring to the Lord. The greater the humility and knowledge, the greater is the worship through singing, providing that the lyrics are doctrinally accurate. We must keep in mind that many songs sung in worship service are not written by knowledgeable believers, and so the lyrics are not doctrinally accurate. In these instances listening to and singing these so-called hymns is a way of blaspheming God.

Prayer is a powerful and wonderful ministry that also results from spiritual growth. The greater the humility and knowledge of God, the greater becomes a person's effectiveness in prayer (Jam. 4:3; 1 John 3:22). Thus, singing hymns, a mandate from God, and prayer, a powerful ministry, should be an expression of one's love for the members of the trinity based on humility and knowledge.

Anything the unbeliever can do is not the spiritual life. There are many false ideas regarding the spiritual life. Personality and overt appearance are not spirituality. Sweetness of personality, mannerisms, dress, avoiding the use of cosmetics, neglecting grooming, pious speech, poor posture, and expressions of sincerity do not imply spirituality. Although you may be very moral, this does not imply that you have a great relationship with God. Unbelievers can do all of the above things, and they are not spiritual.

Giving up things does not imply spirituality. Giving up gambling, drinking, and smoking, for example, is not spirituality. Smoking is bad for your lungs; red pepper is hard on the stomach and chocolate is bad for the teeth, but just because one inhales or ingests something that is harmful into the body does not mean he is sinful. Are Koreans sinful because they eat excessive amounts of red pepper or Thais because they favor chili peppers?

You are not spiritual because your sins are more respectable than another Christian. One Christian worries all the time; another Christian is getting drunk all the time. The Christian who worries all the time says to himself, 'I'm a spiritual Christian because I don't get drunk.' This type of reasoning is not based upon the Word of God. The Scripture never says that worry is a part of the spiritual life. In both cases the Christian is equally out of fellowship.

A Christian is not necessarily spiritual because he is involved in Church activity. Giving, church attendance, participation in prayer meetings, bringing visitors into the Church and teaching Sunday school does not necessarily imply spirituality or spiritual growth. For example a Christian may pray four hours each day, but have no spiritual strength to handle even the simplest of pressures and testing in life. A Christian who prays a lot is not necessarily a great believer; however, effective praying is an indication of spiritual advance. Activity is not the basis for determining spiritual growth.

Fellowship is an absolute. A Christian is either filled with the Spirit or not. He is either walking in the light or walking in the darkness. When a Christian sins, he loses his fellowship. However, when he correctly names his sins to God the Father, he recovers his fellowship. Spiritual growth on the other hand is a relative concept. Growth is determined by the amount of metabolized doctrine and humility the believer possesses.

The Spiritual Life is Divine Thinking in the Soul

The Bible is often called “The Word” because it contains words. And words produce thought. These thoughts circulate in the mentality of the soul. One may have the capacity to be very intelligent, but if he does not possess vocabulary, he is unable to think. Without the ability to think, one cannot enjoy life. Without Biblical vocabulary, principles and doctrine, the believer cannot think divine thought. And without the ability to think divine thoughts, one can neither understand nor appreciate God. Furthermore, he will never develop a harmonious rapport with God. Therefore, he will miss the greatest happiness in life.

On the other hand, there is no thought, reason or common sense in the emotions. Emotions weren't designed to think and make decisions, rather they were designed as appreciators of correct thinking within the soul. When the emotions are functioning correctly they are wonderful, but when they are not functioning correctly, they become a major distraction to advancing spiritually.

“Our mouths [Paul, Apollos, Timothy and later Titus] have been opened [they communicated God’s Word] face to face with you, O Corinthians; our hearts [souls] have been enlarged [they knew well God’s Word]. You are not hindered by us, but you are hindered by your emotions [σπλαγχνον / *splanchnon*]” (2 Cor. 6:11-12)

The Greek word *splanchnon* can refer to the intestines, impulsive passions, the seat of feelings, emotions, or affection. Here it is used in the sense of the emotions controlling the soul. Whenever we allow our emotions to control us, we become unstable and unhappy. In order to live a happy life, the emotions must be subordinate to our thinking. Since God created us as rational beings, we must be controlled by thought.

It is important for us to understand that God has no emotion. Even though the Scripture talks about the wrath and regret of God, these are only figures of speech. The Scripture also talks about the hands and eyes of God: Does God have

these human characteristics too? In theological terms, the regret and wrath of God are classified as anthropopathisms, whereas the hands and eyes of God are called anthropomorphisms. Actually, God uses a number of literary devices in the Bible in order to better communicate to mankind. For example, when the Bible says that we are in the “hand of God”, this is a literary device to better help us understand eternal security. John 10:28 says: “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.” Hands, eyes, wrath and regret are human characteristics.

Wrath is not only emotion, but also a sin. Many translations of Eph. 4:26 imply that anger is not a sin, though in the Greek we read the words οργιζεσθε και μη 'αμαρτανετε . This verb οργιζεσθε ‘*orgizesthe*’ must be translated in the present middle indicative form, (not the present middle imperative, as it appears in some translations) which signifies an action that is taking place already - “you are angry”. In the next phrase we have the negative imperative μη (*mae*) with 'αμαρτανετε (*hamartanete*) - “stop sinning” . The literal translation is therefore “You are angry, and (now) stop sinning”. Other verses which help us to see that both anger and wrath are sinful are Ephesians 4:31, Matthew 5:22, and Galatians 5:20. Therefore, it would be blasphemous to assign these sins to God.

Regret is related to making a bad decision. Since God has always known everything simultaneously and since he is perfect, he has never made a bad decision. Also, emotions are always changing. Emotions go up and down, and contribute to feelings that come and go. The origin of the word ‘emotion’ means to move, to change. God never changes (Heb.13:8). Therefore to say that God has emotions is also blasphemy.

Let us also consider the verse “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35). When we read passages regarding the humanity of Jesus Christ only, we read “Jesus” which means savior and is a reference to his humanity. So this display of good emotion is from the humanity of Jesus Christ, not from his deity. God designed all humans with emotions to respond to what is in the soul, and the humanity of Jesus Christ was no exception. Another verse which many mistakenly interpret as a show of divine wrath and emotion is in Matt. 21:12 (also Mark 11:15): “...and entering into the temple, Jesus began to cast out those who bought and sold in the temple. And He overthrew the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves...” There is no mention of wrath or any other sinful emotion attributed to Jesus!

The Bible contains God's thinking. If we are going to develop a relationship with God, it must be by means of the thinking in our soul. 1 Corinthians 2:16b tells us that "...we have the thinking of Christ." We grow spiritually through thought, not emotion.

"But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18a)

"Have this attitude [*phroneo*, objective thinking] in yourselves [in your souls] which was also in Jesus Christ." (Phil. 2:5)

The Greek word "phroneo" means to think objectively, and since it is in the present active imperative, we can translate it "keep on thinking objectively". We are commanded to think the divine thoughts that the humanity of Jesus thought.

"Be concentrating on [*aphorao*] Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..." (Heb. 12:2a).

Most Bibles translate the word "aphorao" as "keep your eyes on", or "keep looking at" which is difficult to do as Jesus now sits at the right hand of God. To make application of this verse possible requires the more precise translation "to concentrate on". Concentration requires knowledge, self discipline and humility. We are commanded to concentrate on, to focus our attention on, to think about Jesus. To think about Jesus requires knowledge of Him, which can only be acquired through the constant study and metabolization of Bible doctrine, under the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Eternal Security

Eternal Security may be defined as an unbreakable relationship with the love of God, whom has given us salvation and eternal security on the basis of His grace, not our own personal merit.

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have reconciliation with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our access by means of faith into this grace in which we stand. Consequently, let us rejoice because of confidence in the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:1-2)

The phrase, “we have obtained our access by means of faith into this grace” is a reference to obtaining salvation, whereas the perfect tense of the Greek word “histemi” in the phrase, “in which we stand”, means that we stood on grace at salvation, and we keep on standing on grace forever i.e. eternal security. We didn't deserve salvation, and no matter how far we advance spiritually we never will. Therefore, our guarantee of eternal security cannot be based upon our human morality and righteousness, but on God's grace and love.

“For by grace you have been saved [εστε σεσωσμενοι / *este sesosmenoi* (the periphrastic verb construction)] through faith, and this [τουτο / *touto* - reference to salvation] is not from yourselves; it is a gift from God, not by works, lest any man should boast.” (Eph. 2:8-9)

We have been saved by grace, so also our salvation is preserved by grace. We were sinners before salvation, and we are sinners after salvation. Because God saved us while we were unrighteous sinners, we can be confident that he will not remove our salvation even while we remain as unrighteous sinners.

The verbal phrase “have been saved”, is actually two verbal forms side by side in the Greek. This construction is called the periphrastic and is the strongest verbal construction in the Greek language. The periphrastic construction here includes an intensive perfect tense which emphasizes the results of the verbal action, namely, a salvation that includes eternal security. Paul uses the strongest verbal construction

in the Greek language to emphasize the certainty of eternal security. The full translation into English would be as follows: for by grace you have been assuredly saved through faith...” However, since this translation is a little cumbersome in the English, we usually use a simpler, shorter and less accurate translation. In summary Paul is stressing the fact that eternal security is completely a matter of grace and, therefore cannot be altered by the Christian.

The demonstrative pronoun “this” (τουτο) is in the neuter gender. Therefore, its antecedent cannot be either the words “grace” or “faith”, since both of these words are feminine in gender. In other words the neuter demonstrative pronoun does not have an antecedent in this passage. When this occurs in the Greek language, the entire preceding idea is used for the antecedent. The preceding idea in this passage is salvation. Therefore, the word *this* is a reference to salvation.

Understanding the grammar in this passage is very important. If one does not understand this passage well, he can easily develop false theology. A principle we learn here is that correct interpretation cannot consistently be understood from a translation. Furthermore, if the interpretation is incorrect, the teaching will be incorrect. Incorrect teaching leads to false theology, from which the believer will make false application to his spiritual life.

From the correct interpretation we now see that the “gift from God” is referring to salvation. Whenever God gives a gift, there are no conditions attached to it. God doesn't say, “If you are good, you may keep this gift, but if you are bad, I will take it away from you.” Furthermore, because salvation is given as a gift, God doesn't expect or demand something in return. Many people give gifts expecting, and in some cases even demanding, something in return. This is not true giving. When God gives a gift, it is a true gift. Therefore, because salvation is given by God as a gift, He would never consider taking it back from us.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God

Because we are positionally in union with Christ, we share the Love that God the Father has for the son. There is nothing that can separate us from that love. To emphasis this point Paul even classifies six specific categories (4 couplets and 2 individual categories) to cover the complete range of influences which believers may be deceived into thinking will separate them from their position in Christ and thus nullify their salvation.

“I have confidence that (1) neither death nor life (2) neither angels (elect and fallen) nor principalities (angelic generals and their organizations) (3) neither things present nor things to come (4) nor powers (powerful angelic or human organizations) (5) neither height nor depth (6) nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:38-39)

1. *Neither death nor life...*

Whatever circumstances you face in the dying stages of your physical life, there is nothing in death that can separate you from the love of God. You may die as a total spiritual failure, but you still cannot be separated from your relationship with God. Also, nothing in life can separate you from God's love. You may become so depressed and bitter about life that you may renounce your salvation or commit suicide, but you are still in union with Christ.

2. *...neither angels nor principalities...*

Even though angels and angelic organizations both elect and fallen possess tremendous power, they do not possess enough power to separate you from God's love. Satan possesses tremendous power, yet he is unable to break the bond that exists between the church age believer and God.

3. *...neither things present nor things to come...*

There is nothing in our present nor in our future that is able to separate us from the love of God. Some people have a great imagination about the future. They might imagine a hydrogen bomb detonating near them and consequently vaporizing their body. However, even if a bomb does vaporize your body, it cannot destroy your soul and your relationship with God.

4. *...nor powers...* No organization, whether angelic or human, can separate you from God's love. For example, a communistic government may make it an illegal offence to believe in Jesus Christ, but they do not have the power to change God's love toward you.

5. *...nor height nor depth...* No one in the heavens (height), nor any creature in the heart of the earth (depth) is able to separate you from the love of God. You may blast off in a rocket and travel millions of miles from the earth, but you cannot

separate yourself from God. You may fall into a deep pit within the earth, but this cannot separate you from God's love.

6. *...nor any other type of created thing...*

At the time of writing, this could have referred to Nero, the Roman emperor who became infamous for his brutal persecution of Christians. This refers to any unbeliever possessing greater power than you. No matter how powerful a person may be, his power is nothing compared to God's.

In any good relationship there has to be security. Therefore, when we believe in Jesus Christ, God provides eternal security for us. We are his children forever. Having confidence in this fact, we can now concentrate on developing a wonderful relationship with him.

Salvation does not depend on our faithfulness to God

The greatest thing that God has ever done for us was to send his beloved Son to the cross. Having done the greatest thing for his enemies - the unbelievers (Rom. 5:10) - it follows logically that he would do the much lesser thing for his beloved children. For by comparison it is a lesser thing for God to maintain our salvation; to provide solutions for all the problems we will encounter in time, and to give us a resurrection body, than it was for Him to have his Son become a mediator in hypostatic union and go to the cross.

“He [God the Father] who did not spare his own son, but delivered him over to judgment on behalf of us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?” (Rom. 8:32)

Our salvation does not depend upon our faithfulness. Rather, it depends upon the faithfulness of God.

“Faithful is the Word. If we died with him [and we have], we will live with him.” (2 Tim. 2:11)

The conditional sentences in verses 2 Timothy 2:11-13 are all first class. The first class conditional sentence states a fact or what is assumed to be true.

Because we know that the if clause is true, then the concluding clause must also be true. It is a fact that all believers will live with Jesus Christ forever.

“If we endure [keep advancing spiritually through the pressures of life], we will rule with him [in the millenium]. If we deny him [fail to reach maturity and glorify God], he will deny us [rewards in eternity].” (2 Tim. 2:12)

The believer is going to receive rewards from the Lord Jesus Christ or be denied rewards depending on whether he has fulfilled God's plan for his life. The phrase “if we endure”, means constantly learning Bible doctrine and successfully applying it to the pressures and problems of life, without becoming distracted. To endure also relates to metabolizing doctrine until one has developed reciprocal love for the members of the Trinity. The believer who continues advancing spiritually to a state of spiritual maturity will be appointed to reign with Jesus Christ in the Millennium:

“Furthermore, the winner, even he who keeps my assignments unto the end [of physical life of the individual believer], I will give to him authority over the nations.” (Rev. 2:26)

The Word of God is the thinking of Jesus Christ. If you refuse to make the Word of God your number one priority in life, you are denying Jesus Christ. If you fail to advance to spiritual maturity and glorify God in time, you will be denied eternal rewards when Jesus Christ evaluates all believers after the Rapture. However, failure to execute the spiritual life does not mean loss of salvation:

“If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful for he cannot deny himself.” (2 Tim. 2:13)

Even though a Christian may be totally unfaithful to Jesus Christ in time, he is still in union with Jesus Christ. Therefore, for Jesus Christ to reject the believer is to reject himself which is blasphemous even to suggest.

Divine discipline implies security

When we believe in Jesus Christ, we enter into a family relationship with God. Galatians 3:26 reads: “For all of you are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” Once we become sons, we are always sons. One may be a good son or daughter, or a bad son or daughter, but we cannot change the relationship we have with our parents. The same is true of our relationship with God.

“Though he falls [believer's failure], he will not be completely cast down [will not lose his salvation], because the Lord is the one who sustains him with his hands.” (Ps. 37:24)

The very fact that God severely disciplines believers implies that he has not removed their salvation. If a Christian fails in his spiritual life, he is going to be disciplined; sometimes lightly and sometimes severely:

“My son [still a believer], do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint [in the soul] when you are reprovved by him, for those whom the Lord loves [every Christian], he disciplines and he scourges every son whom he receives.” (Heb. 12:5b, 6)

Although God does not remove a son from his family, he does discipline him severely. Let me illustrate this point: If an employee in a company makes a terrible mistake, the employer has two options. He can either fire the employee or discipline him. If he decides to fire the employee, there is no need for further discipline. However, if the employer decides to discipline the employee, it means that the employee is still a member of the company. God's disciplining of us implies that we are still in the family.

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

“Stop grieving the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you have been sealed to the day of redemption.” (Eph. 4:30)

Nowadays a signature or rubber stamp is used as a sign of authority and consent upon important documents, but the Romans used a signet ring which they pressed into wax. When a Roman pressed his ring into wax, it was called sealing. Sealing was a signature guarantee. When a king sealed a proclamation it became law. When people signed a contract by using a seal, it was a guarantee from them that they would honor their part. Sealing was used as a guarantee of transactions and authentication of official documents and directives such as policies of kings or rulers. The sealing of tombs, libraries, and treasuries indicated ownership. Sealing was also used to ratify treaties or agreements.

God the Holy Spirit guarantees that you will be at the rapture of the church. Furthermore, he has placed his seal on your soul making your soul God's property. Your soul no longer belongs to you. Even if you want to return it to the devil, you can't.

In most passages of Scripture, redemption refers to the soul being redeemed, but in this verse the day of redemption refers to the rapture of the Church when the body of the Church age believer will be redeemed. The soul is redeemed at salvation, whereas the body is redeemed at the Rapture. Your body will be redeemed. This is God's guarantee.

Man's failure doesn't abrogate the integrity of God. Man's weakness does not cancel God's strength. Lack of integrity in the believer cannot cancel the integrity of God. Failure to fulfill God's plan does not cancel eternal security. Yet those who think that they can commit some sin which will cancel salvation are more impressed with their human failures than they are with the grace plan of God. They overestimate their own power while underestimating the grace and power of God.

Psalm 118:24

Super-abundance of Happiness

Psalm 118:24 “This is the day which the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and have super-abundance of happiness [simicha] in it.”

The Hebrew word “simicha” cannot be translated into English by one word. The best translation for this word is “to have super-abundance of happiness.”

Principles:

1. God provides one day at a time and the doctrine (a spiritual life) to enjoy that day. This means that if one neglects to learn and apply doctrine on a particular day, he will miss out on some blessing. If a believer accumulates a lot of days of missing doctrine and blessing, he is going to be in serious trouble in one way or another. God intends for the believer to enjoy every day with super-abundance of happiness.

2. The accumulation of today’s doctrine combined with tomorrow’s doctrine means great future blessing. God gives the believer 24 hours each day, yet the egotistical person is so lacking in appreciation that he refuses to spend even an hour of that day learning the Word of God. He thinks his own interests are more important than God’s plan for his life, and becomes so preoccupied with false values and priorities that he has no time or interest for learning Bible doctrine on a consistent basis. In turn he becomes ‘foolish’, having no knowledge or understanding of God (Jer. 4:22). Therefore his arrogance will keep him ignorant of God and His plan, and so prevent him from ever discovering the super-abundance of happiness.

3. By missing the blessings of each day, we postpone the blessings of the future. Abraham complained that he didn’t have a son (Gen. 15:2, 3). He missed the blessing that God had for him that moment, that day. So, God

postponed this blessing for 14 more years. He complained at 85; he was given a son at 99 when he finally had the capacity for (ability to appreciate) the great blessing of having a son from whom would come God's chosen race.

4. The believer who hasn't accumulated sufficient Bible doctrine in his soul anticipates happiness from people, things and circumstances instead. However, because people, things and circumstance cannot provide happiness for a believer, he will inevitably become frustrated, bitter and full of complaints.

5. God graciously provides daily doctrine for every believer who is genuinely willing to learn, so that he will have the capacity to enjoy each day with a super abundance of happiness, based on his confidence in God's love and provision.

Romans 5:6

The Perfection of Christ

While some readers may find the next passage technical in parts and appearing to have no immediate application to the spiritual life, it is essential that you understand how we come to acquire the sin nature at the beginning of human life and how it influences our lives; and how by God's grace we are able to receive his righteousness at the moment of belief in Christ. Knowledge of these concepts will provide you with a stronger basis to understanding and appreciating the characteristics of God, as well as a better understanding of His plan for humankind and you as the individual believer.

Romans 5:6 “For while we were yet helpless at the right time Christ died as a substitute for the godless ones [unbelievers].”

Mankind is born with a sin nature and without a human spirit.

When Adam committed the original sin of disobedience he died spiritually – that is, he acquired a sin nature and lost his human spirit. Adam was warned that in the day that he ate from the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, he would die spiritually.

“But from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you [Adam] shall not eat from it for in the day that you eat from it dying [the Hebrew infinitive: $\tau\omega\mu$ *mot*: spiritual death] you will die. [the Hebrew imperfect: $\tau\omega\mu\tau$ *tamut*: physical death]” (Gen. 2:17)

In most translations of Genesis 2:17, the Hebrew doubling of the verb (the infinitive followed by the imperfect) is translated as an intensive “you shall surely die”. However, this translation does not convey the true meaning

of this verse. The Hebrew doubling of the verb “mot tamut” should be translated “dying you will die” as certain scholars have argued. In this case the infinitive “dying” refers to spiritual death, and “you will die” refers to physical death. Adam and his wife died spiritually immediately, but did not die physically for many years after.

On the very day that Adam and his wife ate of the fruit, they acquired sin natures and lost their human spirits. They demonstrated their possession of sin natures when they put on fig leaves (Gen. 3:7). Here Adam demonstrated how man with a sin nature seeks to solve his relationship with God through some method of human good or religion. Then, when the Lord came into the garden and called for them that he might judge them, they demonstrated the loss of their human spirits by hiding from the Lord (Gen. 3:8). No human spirit means no relationship with God; no relationship with God means judgment. If Jesus Christ were to announce that he was going to visit your city tomorrow to judge, most believers would welcome him even if they were out of fellowship. However, most unbelievers would stay out of sight since they do not have a human spirit, and therefore no relationship with God. Also, since Adam and Eve no longer had a relationship with God, they easily succumbed to the temptation of fear from their sin natures (Gen. 3:10). In their fallen states, Adam and his wife both possessed a sin nature, but no longer possessed a human spirit. As a result, Adam’s descendants at birth also possess a sin nature (Rom. 5:12), and are without a human spirit (1 Cor. 2:14; Jude 19). The progeny of Adam are born like fallen Adam.

“For this reason just as through one man [Adam, not the woman], the sin nature entered the world and through the sin nature, death [God legally imputes Adam’s original sin to the sin nature of the individual at birth. This results in spiritual death], and in this way death [spiritual death] spread [through the male sperm] to all mankind because in him [the human race was seminally in Adam] all have sinned. [imputation of Adam’s Original Sin at birth]” (Rom. 5:12)

Paul calls the unbeliever ‘the soulish man’ because the unbeliever possesses a body and soul, but no human spirit:

“But the soulish man [ψυχικος ανθρωπος (*psukikos anthropos*)] cannot receive the things [the Word of God] from the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to understand because they are spiritually discerned. [one needs a human spirit]” (1 Cor. 2:14)

Jude even defines the soulish man for us, clearly stating that the unbeliever does not possess a human spirit:

“These are the ones [unbelievers] causing divisions, soulish ones [ψυχικοι (*psuchikoi*)] not having a spirit [πνευμα μη εκχοντες (*pneuma me echotes*)].” (Jude 19)

The sin nature resides in the cell structure of the body.

When the believer is out of fellowship, the sin nature controls the soul. When the sin nature controls the soul, the believer is described as having a ‘desperately wicked heart’ (Jer. 17:9). In other words, the sin nature residing in the cell structure of the body presents temptations which enter the soul and become defined in words and thought. So, although the sin nature does not reside in the soul, it can entice the volition of the soul with well defined temptations. Once this temptation is defined the volition must make a decision for or against. If the person consents to the temptation, the sin nature takes control of the soul and sin is produced (Jam. 1:13-15).

The sin nature is not part of the soul. Since the sin-nature is material and mortal, it can not be an intrinsic part of the immaterial and immortal soul. Furthermore, a righteous God cannot create anything related to evil and the sin nature is definitely evil. So, when God creates the soul at birth for each

member of the human race, it does not possess a sin nature. Paul uses the words σαρκί / sarks (flesh); ἁμαρτία / *hamartia* (sin, sin nature); το σωμα της ἁμαρτίας / *to soma tes harmartias* (the body of sin) and ὁ παλαιός ἄνθρωπος / *ho palaios hemon anthropos* (our old man) for the sin nature. Paul called the sin nature ‘flesh’ and the ‘body of sin’ because the sin nature resides in the cells of the body. He called it ‘our old man’ as it is as old as the garden:

“For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh [sin nature] sold in bondage to sin [sin nature]” (Rom. 7:14).

“But, I say, walk by means of the Spirit and you will not execute the lusts of the flesh [the sin nature]” (Gal. 5:16).

“Knowing this that our old man [sin nature] was crucified with him so that the body of sin [sin nature] might be rendered powerless in order that we should no longer be slaves to the sin [nature]” (Rom. 6:6).

The sin nature is passed down through the man in copulation.

Since the sin nature resides in the cell structure of the body, it is passed down to the next generation biologically. The sperm and the egg are biological life. Thus, when the sperm and the egg are united at conception, biological life is perpetuated and the sin nature is transmitted to the offspring.

Now, David understood that the sin nature is passed down in conception. Some theologians completely misunderstand the phrase, “in sin he was conceived.” They think that Jesse, David’s father committed adultery resulting in the birth of David. This is ridiculous! There would be no reason for David to make such a statement about his father even if it had been true. David is teaching a very important point of doctrine: namely that the sin nature is passed down at conception.

“Behold, I was born in iniquity [Adam’s original sin imputed] and in sin I was conceived [sin nature passed down in conception].” (Ps. 51:5).

Since Adam was given authority over the woman, and since he sinned knowing well the consequences, he would be the one who would pass the sin nature down to his offspring:

“For this reason just as through one man [Adam, not the woman], the sin nature entered the world and through the sin nature, death [spiritual death] - and in this way death [spiritual death] spread [through the male sperm] to all mankind because in him [the human race was seminally in Adam] all have sinned [because of the imputation of Adam’s original sin at birth]”. (Rom. 5:12)

In order for God to pass down the sin nature through the man in copulation, the sin nature must reside in the sperm, but not in the egg. The egg had to remain free of the sin nature so that God’s plan for salvation for all mankind could be fulfilled. If the sin nature also resided in the egg, the humanity of Christ would also have been born with a sin nature, leaving humanity without the perfect sacrifice necessary to propitiate the sins of mankind.) Thus, God designed the production of the ovum differently from the production of the sperm.

Even though the woman possesses the sin nature in each cell of her body, the egg, a gamete (half-cell), does not possess the sin nature. The egg manufacturing process is called meiosis and polar body. Only one functional ovum is produced from each primary oocyte. The other cells produced are polar bodies that degenerate. We can logically deduce that the sin nature resides in these polar bodies which degenerate and perish. This leaves an ovum free of the sin nature’s contamination.

When the man produces the sperm, nothing is destroyed. The sperm manufacturing process is very different from the egg manufacturing process. God designed these processes differently in order that the man would be the transmitter of the sin nature to the human race, and the female egg would be free of the sin nature.

Man is a sinner at birth.

The sin nature cannot function without human life since the temptations of the sin-nature must be put into thought within the soul before they can entice the soul's volition. Rather, the sin nature begins to function when the fetus receives a soul and acquires human life. Therefore, the beginning of human life and the activation of the sin nature are simultaneous. Human life begins when God imputes the soul to the physical body, at which time He also imputes Adam's original sin to the sin nature. Thus, mankind is born physically alive, but spiritually dead.

“For all have sinned [through the imputation of Adam's sin at birth] and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom 3:23).

“For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners [the imputation of Adam's original sin at birth], even so through the obedience of one [the humanity of Christ], many [those who believe] will be made righteous [receive imputed righteousness at salvation].” (Rom 5:19).

The humanity of Christ was born perfect.

God never does anything without a reason. Why do you think that God would not permit Joseph to copulate with Mary in the formation of the biological life of Jesus? If he had, Jesus Christ would not have been born perfect for he would have possessed a sin nature via the sperm. However, to maintain God's perfect plan, Joseph was not permitted to copulate with Mary until after the birth of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:25).

Furthermore, Jehoiachin, the forebear of Joseph was very evil. Since he was so evil, God decreed that the Messiah would not come down through the line of Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah or Coniah). This line starts with David and includes Solomon, Jehoiachin, and Joseph. Therefore the Messiah cannot be a descendant of Joseph.

“Thus says the Lord, ‘Write this man down childless [no royal heir]. A man who will not prosper in his days for no man of his descendants will prosper sitting on the throne of David or ruling again in Judah” (Jer. 22:30).

However, Mary’s line starts with David, then Nathan and finally to Mary herself. God chose this line to be the Messianic line. God had to use Mary’s twenty three chromosomes to form the biological life of the human nature of Christ, otherwise Christ would not be the Son of David. God also had to use the egg of Mary because the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 stated that the humanity of Jesus Christ would come through the seed of a woman.

“In those days and at that time (in the millennium), I will cause a righteous branch of David [through Nathan and Mary] to spring forth, and he [Jesus Christ, the Son of David] shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth.” (Jer. 33:15)

“And I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman [the Savior comes through the woman], and between your seed [the unbelievers] and her seed [the humanity of Christ and believers]; He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.” (Gen. 3:15)

The Lord Jesus Christ solved man’s problem.

As Adam was offered the redemptive solution so his progeny must also be offered the redemptive solution. The Lord Jesus Christ explained the cross to Adam and his wife using an animal sacrifice. After they both responded by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he clothed them with the skins of the animal, an act representative of them being clothed with the righteousness of God (Gen. 3: 21). Even though the cross had not yet taken place historically, God knew that it would, and so was able to provide salvation for all those in the Old Testament who believed in the coming Messiah, the one who would die for their sins.*

* The word 'Messiah' means 'anointed' (from the Hebrew), translated in the New Testament as 'Christ' from the Greek word 'Christos' of the same meaning.

Then at the right time in history, Jesus Christ went to the cross and died as a substitute for us, namely, he was judged for the sins of the entire human race. The sins related to the spiritual death of every human require a penalty. A righteous God cannot allow sin to go unpunished. However, as God is a perfect God, so too must the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of mankind be perfect. As the Lord Jesus Christ was a perfect substitute for the human race, he received the punishment of all the sins of mankind. His death was a substitutionary atonement:

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2).

“He [God the Father] made him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in him [Jesus Christ].” (2 Cor. 5:21)

Death always involves a separation. The humanity of Jesus Christ was separated from God the Father while he was being judged for our sins. This meant that Jesus Christ had no fellowship with the Father during the judgment:

“My God, my God, why have you [singular form of the second person pronoun] forsaken me.” (Ps. 22:1a; Matt. 27:46)

Jesus Christ himself was not spiritually dead. That would be blasphemous to even suggest. He had no sin nature; no imputation of Adam's sin; no personal sins of his own. Although the humanity of Jesus Christ had no fellowship with the Father during those last three hours on the cross, he continued to have fellowship with the Holy Spirit who sustained him during that critical period of history. When Jesus said, “why have you forsaken me?” it does not refer to God the Holy Spirit. The pronoun “you” is

in the singular and only refers to God the Father. After his work was finished on the cross, he prayed to the Father demonstrating that his spiritual life was still perfect (John 19:30, Luke 23:46).

In this way Jesus Christ provided salvation for all mankind. So, even though mankind was born helpless and separated from God (sinners with a sin nature and lacking a human spirit), the work of Jesus Christ on the cross solved both the problem of sin and the sin nature, making it possible for mankind to acquire a human spirit at salvation and to have an eternal relationship with God.

Romans 8:29-30

Printouts and Volitional Freedom within the Divine Decree

Romans 8:29-30: “[We know] that whom He foreknew He also predestined conformed ones to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren [Church age believers]. And whom He predestined, these same ones He also elected, and whom He elected, these same ones He also justified, and whom He justified, these same ones He also glorified.”

Foreknowledge, predestination, election, justification, and glorification are words which only apply to the Church Age believer, never the unbeliever. These verbs in verses 29 and 30 are all in the aorist tense, which means they occurred simultaneously in the mind of God in eternity past. To use the analogy of a computer we could say that these were all simultaneous printouts from the computer of the Divine Decree.

Foreknowledge

In order to understand foreknowledge, we must first understand the omniscience of God, and how it related to the Divine Decree. The omniscience of God knows all the knowable simultaneously about his creatures. God knows every thought, motivation, decision and action of every person in history. He knows not only the actual outcomes that occur in history, but also all the possible outcomes. So He knows every decision that you could have made, but didn't. For example, had you chosen to reject Jesus Christ, God knows exactly how you would have lived out the rest of your life, and even the effect that your rejection of Christ would have on world history. The omniscience of God is infinite.

God does not think sequentially since his knowledge is eternal and simultaneous. His knowledge is not limited by time, a concept which was

created specifically for the human race (Gen. 1:14). Thus, the omniscience of God has always known every person who would believe in Jesus Christ and every person who would not. So, trillions of years ago, it was as if God typed your name onto a computer file and next to your name he typed “Believed in Jesus Christ.”

Many Christians are ignorant of the essence of God, and so their thinking is incorrect regarding God’s plan of salvation for mankind. They assume that God specially chose them to become Christians since they were elected in eternity past. They think that God must think chronologically as they do. They think that if God elected them trillions of years ago, then He must have chosen them while personally condemning their unbelieving neighbor to hell. This is applying our limited knowledge to God. God does not wish for a single soul to perish! To believe that God would wish such a thing blasphemes the righteousness and grace of God:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

“This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God who desires all mankind to be saved and to come to the metabolized knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:3, 4)

God always knew who would believe in Christ and become Christians. In this way, God elected them in Christ, because in his mind they were in union with Christ trillions of years ago (Eph. 1:4). The omniscience of God always knew that you would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. So after typing “Believed in Jesus Christ” next to your name and the names of all other people who would believe in Jesus Christ, He then made a separate printout of all these names, with the file name: “Whom He foreknew.”

Even though these were all simultaneous events in the mind of God, it may be helpful to see these matters in chronological order, as the human mind tends to think chronologically. In this regard we could say that omniscience occurred first, then the divine decree declaring all those who

believed in Christ, and finally the printout of all “Whom he foreknew” to believe in Christ.

The omniscience of God merely typed into the computer of the divine decree the facts about each Christian. There is no coercion involved in any person’s decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. God created all men with freewill; freewill means that each man has freedom to accept or reject salvation. When a person chooses to reject Christ, he is condemning himself to eternal life in hell. When you chose to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, a decision which entitled you to eternal life in heaven, you used your free will to do so.

Predestination – God’s provision in eternity past

Predestination is a part of God’s decree providing everything the Church age believer needs to execute His plan, purpose and will. God provided in the Divine Decree everything the Christian would need. He provided logistical grace, solutions to all of the believer’s problems, deserved and undeserved suffering, and great blessing for the believer who advances in the spiritual life. For some he predestined that they would die the ‘sin unto death’ (1 John 5:16) since he knew that they would never fulfill his plan in time. For others he predestined that they would die with the greatest possible blessing and happiness since he knew that they would become mature believers.

Predestination coordinates with omniscience so that the free will of man is never violated. God never turns your yes into no and your no into yes. God’s omniscience typed into the computer of divine decree the thoughts, motivations, decisions and acts of every Christian. Based on this information God was able to design a predestined plan for each believer. For some it means great blessings in time and in eternity; for others it means great misery in time and loss of the greater blessings in the eternal state.

God’s sovereignty predestined certain blessings for all Christians even though many believers would fail to carry out their spiritual responsibilities. God’s sovereignty predestined that every church-age believer would receive 40 spiritual assets at salvation and a resurrection body at the rapture of the Church.

God predestined for all Christians to be ‘conformed to the image of His son’ through positional, experiential and ultimate sanctification. Through *positional sanctification*, we are ‘conformed to His image’ by being clothed with his characteristics (Gal. 3:27).

Through *experiential sanctification* some Christians will choose to make use of God’s provision for advancement in the spiritual life. These are the believers who follow God’s plan and advance to spiritual maturity, in doing so becoming conformed to the characteristics that the humanity of Jesus Christ acquired through the spiritual life given to him.

Through *ultimate sanctification*, all believers will be freed of their sin nature as they are given a resurrection body like that of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Election, Justification, and Glorification

Election is the expression of the sovereign will of God for the Christian’s life; whereas predestination is the provision (His plan) for the life of the Christian. The sovereignty of God willed the highest and the best for every believer. To demonstrate this he deposited in eternity past great blessings for the Christian in time as well as eternity. Many Christians will not receive these greater blessings because of their spiritual failure. Since they will not grow spiritually and develop a love for him, these blessings cannot be distributed to them although it is God’s desire for them to have these greater blessings (Eph. 1:3; 3:19, 20). The equal privilege and opportunity of election means there never has been and never will be a Church age believer who did not have exactly the same privilege and same opportunity to fulfill God’s plan, to reach spiritual maturity, and to receive the fantastic blessings provided for him by God the Father in eternity past.

Even though justification is a printout of the computer of the divine decree, it comes into effect for the individual when he makes a decision to believe in Jesus Christ. When this wonderful decision occurs, he is immediately given the righteousness of God. Once righteousness has been imputed, he is then justified: that is, declared perfectly righteous and qualified to live with God forever.

Every Church age believer is glorified when he receives his resurrection body at the Rapture of the Church. Furthermore, the mature believer is glorified when God provides for him the greater grace blessings both in time and eternity (James 4:6). When Paul became the greatest man of doctrine in the Church age, not only was God glorified, but so was Paul. After his evaluation by the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul will be given the Crown of Glory, the Crown of Life, the Crown of Righteousness. When others see Paul wearing his crowns, they will recognize Paul as one of the greatest men of history. Paul will have many blessing and privileges that others will not have. This will be a part of Paul's glory. Paul used his volition to glorify God; God will in turn clothe Paul with great status and blessing.

Conclusion:

Omniscience preceded the decree, whereas Election, Predestination, Foreknowledge, Justification, and Glorification are 'printouts' from the decree. Election is the sovereign will of God desiring the highest and the best for the believer. Election connotes the believers entrance into the plan of God whereas Predestination is the sovereign provision of God, namely his plan for each believer. Foreknowledge acknowledges only what is in the decree about the believer, but makes nothing certain (does not put anything into the decree and does not decree anything). God justifies the believer when he receives the imputation of divine righteousness at the point of salvation. Not only is God glorified when he can bless the believer, but so too is the believer.

God Always Loves Us

While suffering through times of intense divine discipline or testing, the believer is able to take comfort in knowing that God loves him with a personal love that is unfailing and infinite.

God legally imputed to us his perfect righteousness at the moment we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ: “Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe for there is no distinction” (Rom. 3:22). You now have God’s righteousness credited to your account (Rom. 4:5). Since you now possess perfect righteousness, the three members of the Trinity all love you with a perfect and infinite love: “He loves righteousness and justice and the earth is full of the unfailing love of the Lord” (Ps. 33:5). This is also true in God’s relationship with the other members of the Trinity. Since God the Son is perfectly righteous, God the Father and God the Holy Spirit have always personally loved him and vice versa. Since you now possess this same righteousness, you will always be the object of God’s personal love.

God’s love toward you never changes. From the time of your salvation and throughout eternity, God’s love toward you will always be infinite and unchanging: “Righteousness and Justice are the foundation of your [God’s] throne; loving kindness [$\delta\sigma\epsilon\xi\epsilon$ / *chesed* - steadfast love, unfailing love] and truth go before you” (Ps. 89:14). The Hebrew word “chesed” has three meanings: loving kindness, steadfast love and unfailing love. God’s love is steadfast, unfailing; it never varies. God has always loved his righteousness and since we possess his righteousness, he always loves us with a personal love.

Even when we commit our worst sin, the love of God does not change toward us. When we sin and get out of fellowship, God will discipline us - sometimes severely - but his tremendous love toward us does not change:

“For those whom the Lord loves [personal love for each believer] he disciplines, and he scourges [μαστιγοω / intensive discipline] every son whom he receives” (Heb. 12:6).

Scourging is a metaphor for severe discipline. Sometimes God has to discipline us severely because this is the only way he can make us obey his plan. God wants all believers to be obedient to his plan because his plan was designed not only to glorify Him, but also to provide us with abundant happiness. God desires for you to be abundantly happy because he loves you personally. Therefore, you may take comfort in the fact that any suffering you face in your Christian life is because God loves you and wants the best for you.

Moses

God's Faithful Servant

It is important to study the lives of great believers in the Bible, so that we may apply the principles that made them great believers to our own lives. As we will see, Moses was one of the greatest believers of the Old Testament, and one of the greatest believers of all time. What was it that made him so great? It is interesting to read that the majority of the Jews in the Exodus generation were constantly accusing Moses of arrogance. They began at the Red Sea by accusing Moses of planning to kill them:

“They said to Moses, ‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?’ ” (Ex. 14:11)

So, finally, God told Moses to write down the following sentence and then to teach it to the two million arrogant adults:

“Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.” (Num. 12:3)

Moses was the most humble man of his day. He will probably hold the record for being the most humble man in all of human history.

Humility is the opposite of arrogance. Humility is developed through obedience to all areas of legitimate authority. Rejection of authority produces arrogance whereas acceptance of authority produces humility. Humility removes subjectivity; while arrogance increases subjectivity. Because of Moses' humility he was promoted and blessed by God. James 4:6b states: “God makes war [literal translation] against the arrogant, but he gives grace to the humble.” Christians who do not obey God by learning and applying doctrine to their lives are inciting God to flog them until there is no skin left

on their backs: “For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and He scourges every son whom He receives.” (Heb. 12:6). These believers are the most miserable creatures on the face of the earth.

One cannot obey what one does not know. Moses learned doctrine first, and then he obeyed it. Because of Moses’ obedience God had chosen him to lead the people of Israel

“He [God] made known his ways to Moses [Moses learned and grew spiritually].” (Ps. 103:7)

“He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom He had chosen.”
(Ps. 105:26)

Moses lived forty years in Egypt, forty years in Midian and forty years in the Sinai Peninsula. God made known his ways to Moses during the first eighty years of his life. Then, only when Moses was prepared spiritually, God sent him as his agent to deliver the Jews from Egypt. God cannot use an unprepared believer in a position of leadership; we must also remember that just because a believer is in a position of leadership does not necessarily mean that they have been promoted to that position by God.

“By means of faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of the Pharaoh's daughter (Moses refused the throne of Egypt).” (Heb. 11:24)

“By faith, he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king (Thutmose III); for you see he became strong under pressure, as long as he kept seeing [kept concentrating on] the invisible one.”
(Heb. 11:27)

Preparing for Service

Moses had become a very advanced believer at the age of forty while he was still in Egypt. However, it took forty more years of understanding grace

and developing authority orientation before God was finally finished with his training of Moses. After nearly eighty years of preparation Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth. Only then was he prepared and ready to serve the Lord as the leader of God's chosen people.

“(16) All Scripture is God breathed and is profitable for teaching [διδασκαλία / *didaskalia*], for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness [experiential righteousness],

(17) in order that the man of God might be proficient, having been well equipped for every good production [Christian service].”

(2 Tim. 3:16, 17)

The Greek word *didaskalia* refers to the pastor of a Church teaching Bible doctrine to a group, namely his congregation. Under his teaching and authority, and with the filling of the Holy Spirit, the members of a congregation learn and metabolize Bible doctrine. Once Biblical truth is in the soul of the believer, it rebukes and counsels him.* If the believer has the humility to accept the rebuke he can then make the necessary corrections.

* The only counseling the believer needs is from the doctrine resident in his soul. When a believer receives personal counseling from his pastor or any other Christian, it is an invasion of privacy of the individual's own priesthood, while encouraging judging, gossip and maligning within the Church.

As the pastor teaches Bible doctrine, the listener develops experiential righteousness in his soul. Experiential righteousness includes such things as grace orientation, humility, and personal love for the members of the Trinity. Verse sixteen above is talking about learning and growing up, not Christian service.

When a Christian becomes spiritually advanced, he is then ready for the execution of verse seventeen. Verse seventeen says in effect that the believer must be prepared spiritually before he is qualified for Christian service. Jesus

Christ prepared thirty years for a three year public ministry. Moses required 80 years of spiritual training before he was ready to lead the Jews out of Egypt. Unfortunately, in many churches today the pastor emphasizes Christian service rather than spiritual preparation. If the emphasis is on spiritual preparation, Christian service would naturally follow. If the believer loves God, he will naturally serve God - he will not need the coercion of his pastor or other Christians to motivate him.

The Disobedience of Moses and the resulting Divine discipline

Moses was the greatest leader in history yet probably the most unappreciated. Just think - Moses led two million adult Jews for forty years, the majority of whom hated him and wanted to kill him! Despite all those years of rebellion Moses faithfully carried out his responsibility of leadership. However, in the 39th year in the desert, Moses disobeyed God, an act which distorted the grace of God (showed contempt for the grace of God) and subjected him to severe disciplinary treatment.

For 39 years in the desert the Jews continually complained. They complained about the food that God provided for them, even though God had been faithful in providing them with mana for 39 years (Num. 11:5,6). Whenever God would test them about regarding water, they complained (Ex. 15:24; 16:2,3; 17:1-3). When God commanded them to enter the Land, they complained (Num. 14:1-3). However, God always provides the essential needs of believers, no matter how degenerate and ungrateful they are (Phil. 4:19). Thirty-nine years earlier, when the Exodus generation were not long out of Egypt, they too had arrived at the same place where now a few of the remnant, but mostly their offspring, now stood. This place had been given the name *Meribah*, which means literally 'to complain': the Jews had complained then, and they were complaining now. After having put up with their complaining and rebellion for 39 years, Moses finally lost his patience. Instead of exercising humility, he reacted with an outburst of anger:

“So Moses took the rod from before the Lord, just as he had commanded him, and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, ‘Listen now, you rebels.

Shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?’ Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.” (Num. 20:9-11)

Moses had been instructed to simply *speak* to the rock to bring forth water ; but instead he *struck* the rock against God’s instructions, after also taking the liberty of scolding the people for their rebellion.

The more responsibility God gives the believer, the more discipline that believer will receive if he is disobedient. Moses is not only the founder and leader of the Jewish nation, but as a prophet he is also their spiritual leader. If a spiritual leader distorts God’s grace, he will be disciplined severely as Moses was. Apart from his relationship with God, the one thing that Moses wanted more than anything else was to enter into the promised land. However, since Moses blasphemed one of the characteristics of God, he had to be punished severely:

“And Jehovah spoke to Moses and Aaron, ‘Because you did not believe Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.’ ” (Num. 20:12)

Initially, Moses reacted with bitterness. Under the concept of self justification, he blamed the two million Jews for his sin (Deuteronomy 1:37). However, as we have seen before, no one can make you sin*. It was Moses who became angry and struck the rock. Fortunately, failure and sin does not destroy the spiritual life of a believer unless that believer does not recover fellowship with God. Moses had tremendous spiritual growth over approximately a hundred year period. This spiritual growth did not suddenly disappear when he disobeyed God. Sure, Moses failed horribly as we all do, but he did recover. After recovering from his bitterness, he obeyed God by commissioning Joshua as the new leader of Israel and then continued writing Deuteronomy (Deut.31:23, 24).

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Jesus Christ quotes from Deuteronomy more than any other book in the Old Testament. Even the funeral of Moses was unique. God the Son personally conducted the funeral and buried Moses (Deut. 34:1-6). Michael and the angelic army under his command would naturally be present for such an occasion, and even Satan was present (Jude 9). No other believer, not even the Apostle Paul, ever had a funeral like the funeral of Moses.

Moses had laid his hands upon Joshua so that Joshua was given the gift of prophecy (Deut. 34:9). Therefore, even though Joshua was not present at the funeral, he was able to finish this last chapter. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit he wrote:

“Since that time no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face” (Deut. 34:10).

The power of the spiritual life is Divine thought. Because Moses developed Divine thought first, God could then use him to fulfill His plan (Ps. 103:7; 105:26, to compare with 2 Tim. 3:16,17) So great was Moses' love for the invisible one that he gave up the throne of Egypt so that he might fulfill God's plan for his life (Heb. 11:26,27). If we desire to be great like Moses, then learning God's word and developing a love for the Lord has to be the most important pursuit in our life.

2 Corinthians 5:20 **Ambassadors of Christ**

2 Corinthians 5:20 “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ as though God were making His appeal through us. We invite you on behalf of Christ become reconciled to God.”

Definition and Description:

An ambassador is a high ranking minister of state or of royalty sent to another state to represent his country or sovereign. By analogy we are spiritual aristocracy as members of the royal family of God, and Christ is the King who has sent us into a foreign country, the devil’s world.

At salvation, every believer is entered into union with the Lord Jesus Christ. In union with Christ, we share His royalty and heavenly citizenship. Although we have citizenship in heaven, we live on this earth. Since we live on this earth, but the Lord does not, we were appointed as His representatives for the remainder of our tenure here.

As the Lord’s ambassadors, we have the responsibility of giving the gospel to the unbeliever. True compassion for the unbeliever is demonstrated by giving him information about the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His salvation work.

The Profile of the Ambassador:

1. An ambassador does not appoint himself. We are appointed by God Himself at the moment we believe in Jesus Christ.

2. The ambassador does not support himself. The Church Age believer, as an ambassador for Christ is given food, clothing, shelter, protection, and instruction. Of course, the ambassador can reject these provisions.

3. The ambassador's instructions are always in written form, so he has no doubt as to what he should do. We have God's policy, principles and instructions written in the Scripture and taught by the pastor.

4. The ambassador does not belong to the country to which he is sent. Our citizenship and home is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

5. The ambassador does not live in the foreign country for his own personal interest. We live here on earth solely to serve the interest of our Lord. Therefore, we subordinate all personal interest to the function of our ambassadorship.

6. The ambassador does not react when either he himself, or his state or sovereign, is being insulted, ridiculed, or maligned. He realizes that his state or sovereign will handle these indignities.

When an ambassador is recalled, his recall is tantamount to a declaration of war. This is analogous to the Rapture of the Church. When the Christian-ambassador is removed from this world at the Rapture, there is tribulation on the earth.

Introduction to:

Romans 10:1-10 **Ritual and Reality**

One of the most important functions of Christian service is giving the Gospel to unbelievers so that they may make a decision to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and thus receive eternal life. However, if the Gospel is not explained properly the unbeliever may think he is saved when he is not.

Many Christians think that the unbeliever must do two things to be saved. He must confess Christ publicly and then believe in Jesus Christ. This comes from a false interpretation of Romans 10. Actually, Paul is teaching just the opposite. In this passage, Paul is explaining the gospel to his brethren, the Jews (Rom. 10:1, 2). In doing so, Paul explains the difference between the ritual of publicly quoting the Word in their worship service and the actual believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul makes it very clear that the ritual of quoting Scripture must come after salvation, not before (verse 10). He has to explain this because many Jews thought they were saved by participating in the Jewish worship service.

Ritual worship included quoting Deuteronomy 6:4. "Listen, O Israel. The Lord [Jehovah] is our God [Elohim]; the Lord is unique". This verse has been a part of Israel's ritual starting shortly after 1441 B.C. Even today, this verse is usually quoted aloud as a part of their ritual when they meet in the synagogue. Therefore, for nearly 3500 years this verse has been used by Jewish people in worship. This ritual was designed to remind the Jews of the source of their salvation which is Jesus Christ. It was never to be interpreted as a means of salvation. Only if the Jewish unbeliever understands Deuteronomy 6:4 can he benefit from it. He has to understand that the expression "The Lord is our God; the Lord is unique" is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, after understanding this, he must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If the unbelieving Jew quotes Deuteronomy 6:4 publicly out-loud, but does not believe in Jesus Christ, it is meaningless. It is ritual without reality.

The Lord is unique

In order to understand Deuteronomy 6:4, we must understand the difference between the words ‘Lord’ and ‘God.’ The Hebrew word ‘Jehovah/Yehovah’ is equivalent to the Greek ‘Kurios’ and both are translated into English as ‘Lord.’ The Hebrew word ‘Elohim’ is equivalent to the Greek ‘Theos’ and both are translated as ‘God.’ The Scripture clearly states that God is one:

“There is no God [Theos], except one.” (1 Cor. 8:4b)

“..but God [Theos] is one.” (Gal. 3:20b)

While there is only one God in essence, there are three persons of the Godhead. The Hebrew word ‘Jehovah’ refers to the individual persons of the Godhead. Since there are three persons of the Godhead, the word Jehovah can not be translated ‘one’. This concept is made clear in such verses as Psalm 110:1 where the Father is speaking to the Son “The Lord [Jehovah] said to my Lord [Adonai*] . . .”

*Here the term ‘Adonai’, also translated as ‘Lord’, is used in parallel context to the word Jehovah, as in Psalm 8:9 where the two terms appear side by side).

Therefore, the Hebrew word “ekhad” in Deuteronomy 6:4 cannot be translated as “one” but must be translated as “unique”, a bona-fide use of the word “ekhad”. Jesus Christ is unique; he is the only God-Man. This also explains why Deuteronomy 6:4, “the Lord is our God; the Lord is unique” was made a part of the Jewish worship service. The Jewish believers who loved the Lord Jesus Christ loved to quote this verse in their worship service in honor of Him.

Salvation is faith alone, in Christ alone

Historically, many Jewish unbelievers also participated in this worship service. This verse was meaningless for those unbelievers. This is why Paul said that if they quoted Deuteronomy 6:4 (and understood it) and believed they would be saved (Rom. 10:9).

Paul realizes that the Jews are confused about their ritual, so makes it clear in Romans 3:21-28 that salvation is faith alone in Christ alone, and totally apart from the Mosaic Law or any other system of works such as the quoting of scripture. Romans 10 says the same. The unbeliever believes in Jesus Christ by means of his stream of consciousness*. Salvation is a mental and volitional function of the soul, not a public acknowledgment.

*('heart' - Paul uses the word καρδία (*kardia*) which can refer to the physical heart, though in the New Testament this word always refers to the mentality / stream of consciousness)

“But now apart from the Law, the righteousness of God [imputed righteousness] has been manifest, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets [a phrase for the Old Testament Scriptures with emphasis on human authorship]. But the righteousness of God through faith [no ritual is necessary] in Jesus Christ is for all those who believe, for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is by Christ Jesus whom God [the Father] publicly displayed as a mercy seat [propitiation] by his blood through faith in Christ to demonstrate His [the Father's] righteousness, because of the passing over of previously committed sins by the delay in judgment from God [the sins of the Old Testament people were not judged until Christ went to the cross]. This is for a demonstration of His righteousness at this present time [time of Paul] in order that He [the Father] might be just, even the justifier [declares righteous] of anyone who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law [does a person obtain perfect righteousness], that of works? [It is] definitely not, but by the law of faith. We maintain that a person is justified [declared righteous] by faith apart from the works of the Law [All systems of human works including ritual are excluded]” (Rom. 3:21-28).

Paul endorses the above statement of faith in Romans 10, where he quotes from Deuteronomy 30, explaining again that salvation has always been, and will always be, by faith alone, in Christ alone.

Romans 10:6-8 (Deuteronomy 30:12-14) “It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘who will go up to heaven for us to get it [the instructions regarding salvation] for us and make us hear it that we may do it [The Jews always wanted to do something for salvation]?’ “Nor is it [salvation] beyond the sea that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us to get it [the instructions of salvation] for us and make us hear it that we may do it?’ “But the word [the Gospel] is very near you - in your mouth [The unbelieving Jews heard about the Savior every time they quoted Deuteronomy 6:4] and in your heart [the reality of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone] so that you can do it [having believed in Christ one can enter into worshipping the Lord]”

In quoting the above passage from the Old Testament, Paul is evangelizing his brethren, the Jews. This passage was not written to evangelize the gentiles. This passage was written to evangelize people who were substituting ritual for reality.

Paul comes to his conclusion in verse 9:

Romans 10:9 “That if you [Jewish believers and unbelievers] acknowledge [to the Father] with your mouth Jesus as Lord [Many Jews have and will participate in the ritual of quoting or listening to Deuteronomy 6:4 in their worship service], and if you will believe in your heart [stream of consciousness] that God has raised Him [Jesus Christ] from the dead [part of the gospel], you will be saved”

The aorist tense of the Greek word “homologeō” means to acknowledge. The aorist tense refers to every time a Jewish person in a synagogue repeats those words or listens to those words stated by the Rabbi. If he is a believer, it is worship. However, if he is an unbeliever, it is meaningless unless he believes in the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Jews in the Old Testament period remained as unbelievers because they embraced the ritual, but they did not

believe in Christ as their savior. The same thing is true today. Many present day Jews participate in the ritual, but they do not believe in Jesus Christ. This is why it is very important for Jewish unbelievers to understand that no one is ever saved by ritual. Paul is showing the unbeliever that if he quotes Deuteronomy 6:4, and if it leads to his understanding of the gospel, it is okay, but it must be followed by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation itself is a function of the mentality and volition of the soul.

Romans 10:10 For in the heart [the stream of consciousness] a person believes resulting in righteousness [imputed], then with the mouth he [the believer] acknowledges [his salvation in worship] because [the Greek word “εἰς” with the accusative of cause] of salvation.

In this verse Paul gives the correct chronological sequence of salvation followed by worship. Paul reverses the order from the previous verse to show the Jews that ritual without salvation is meaningless. The Jew must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ first, and then he may participate in ritual-worship of the Lord.

Conclusion and application of this passage:

Many ministers misunderstand this passage. They think that this passage is the correct procedure for evangelizing gentile unbelievers. They fail to realize that Paul is explaining the gospel to his Jewish brethren.

From false exegesis and analysis comes false interpretation; from false interpretation comes false teaching and application. The “altar call,” that is inviting the unbeliever to come forward in a worship service is a false application of this verse. Churches invite many unbelievers to their worship service. During both the worship service and sermon there is often an extreme arousal of the emotions, so that by the time the pastor has reached the end of an emotionally-pitched sermon to conclude with the altar call, the unbeliever is no longer thinking, but emoting. Then the pastor implores them to come forward to make a public confession and ‘receive’ Jesus Christ, so the unbelievers come forward weeping and wailing all the way. This is not salvation, but emotional nonsense.

Both Moses (Deuteronomy) and Paul have told us that salvation is a mental process. Christians should give the unbeliever accurate information about the Lord Jesus Christ and his work on the cross. Furthermore, the Christian should make the options quite clear to the unbeliever: namely, if you believe in Jesus Christ, you will spend eternity with the Lord; if not, you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. The unbeliever needs information so that he may make a decision based on facts, not emotion.

Salvation has always been faith alone in Christ alone. In this passage Paul is explaining the gospel to Jewish unbelievers, warning them that publicly quoting Scripture is not salvation. Salvation is obtained only by making a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Glossary

Anthropopathism / Anthropomorphism : God's policy (plan, purpose, will) for mankind explained using vocabulary and concepts related to man's frame of reference. An anthropopathism describes divine viewpoint using terms related to human emotion (i.e. "to provoke the wrath of God") whereas an anthropomorphism uses terms related to human anatomy (i.e. "in the hand of God").

Bible Doctrine : Bible doctrine is all the material related to a given Biblical subject. When the pastor-teacher imparts correctly interpreted Bible doctrine to the student filled with the Holy Spirit, that doctrine then becomes metabolized in his soul and ready for application to his spiritual life.

Christian Service : At the moment of salvation every believer enters into fulltime Christian service. The phrase "fulltime Christian service" does not imply the narrow view of having to be a pastor, evangelist, missionary, or a person involved in some kind of Christian service organization. Fulltime Christian service means execution of the plan of God for the Church. In doing so the Christian may perform Christian service through five categories of service, as follows:

1: Christian service related to ones spiritual gift such as the gift of helps, evangelist, pastor-teacher, etc.

2: Christian service related to ones priesthood, such as prayer.

3: Christian service related to ones royal ambassadorship, such as evangelizing.

4: Christian service related to invisible impact, such as the "blessing by association" that is received by people associated with the mature believer.

5: Christian service related to the laws of divine establishment such as paying taxes, voting, and military service.

Divine Decree : Is the sovereign will of God and the free-will of man coexisting together. Every human thought, motivation and action in the Divine Decree was established in eternity past and has always been known to the omniscience of God, though presents itself to humankind as the unfolding of human history.

Filling of the Holy Spirit : Under the filling of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit provides the power that the Christian may understand, metabolize, retain, recall, and apply the Word of God. Under this ministry, the Holy Spirit is our mentor - our authority, encourager, advisor and teacher.

Hypostatic Union : The presence of two natures, undiminished deity and true humanity, in the one person of Jesus Christ. Both natures are inseparably united without loss or mixture of separate identity; without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.

Sin Nature : The sin nature is an integral part of every human being and resides in the cell-structure of the human body. The sin nature is composed of an area of strength producing pseudo good; an area of weakness producing sin; trends towards moral degeneracy (legalism) and immoral degeneracy, and lust patterns.

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