

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF --- TRUTH

*God's sovereignty versus man's free will...the doctrinal paradox
is solved by an ancient Bible doctrine.*



What is doctrine? Think of it as the steel girders which support a tall skyscraper. In a similar manner the proper doctrine provides a structure which supports all Bible verses in a way that harmonizes scripture without contradictions.

TOM HAGLER, JR.

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

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the doctrinal paradox is solved by an ancient Bible
doctrine.**

**Bible Quotations
King James Authorized Version of 1611**

**By
Tom Hagler, Jr.**

November 27, 2006

Notice!

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This forth printing published in November 2006 has revisions in Chapter IV, page 58, and much of Chapter XVII, beginning on page 205.

Introduction

David said, “*I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great spoil,*” Psalms 119:162. David lived in a time when the Bible was not yet complete, but he counted those portions that were available as the greatest of all treasures. Tom Hagler proves by his studies and his writings, that he is one of those rare individuals who have such a regard for God’s Word.

The Bible is God’s full and complete revelation to His people. It tells us everything we need to know and do religiously. There is no question regarding religion it does not satisfactorily answer. It provides the answer for the most vexing questions: where did we come from; what about the universe; where did it come from; what about sin and salvation, life and death, heaven and hell?

More than that, it is the only dependable guide as to how to conduct our lives. It provides clear and usable advice for every situation in which we will ever find ourselves. It teaches us how to be better parents, better children, better neighbors, and better citizens of our country.

Tom Hagler has made it his passion to search this *book of all books* to find answers to the most important questions, and in this volume he shares some of those findings with us.

In readings his comments, it is easy to see his all-consuming zeal to know more about God and His Word; and it is easy to see that he gets more than a little impatient with those who seem so unconcerned to hear what God has to say. If you are one of those people who think what God says is important, you will find the time reading this book to be well spent.

Elder Harold Hunt

Acknowledgements

My former pastor Elder Harold Hunt has been of tremendous benefit to me over the years as I have tried to write on several Bible subjects...this has been my way of studying the Bible. He has encouraged and assisted me in all that I have written. I consider Brother Harold to be one of the most gifted writers we have among the Primitive Baptists, making difficult subjects easy to understand. He is an excellent pastor and one who has promoted peace and unity among "old school" churches in our area of the country. His material can be obtained by contacting him at 2516 East Clark Ave., Maryville, TN 37804.

Elder Sam Bryant, who is also my former pastor, has been a constant encouragement to me as I have tried to write on various Bible subjects. He has made suggestions and has challenged me to think more deeply on doctrinal subjects.

Elder Michael Gowens is also an excellent and scholarly writer. He has written many valuable books besides those mentioned in this book such as *Basic Bible Doctrines*. Material from Elder Gowens can be obtained from the internet at www.sovgrace.net or at Sovereign Grace Publications, Post Office Box 34514, Lexington, KY 40523.

The preaching of Elder Sonny Pyles has been the source of the idea and expressions to use in several chapters of this book (as noted). In my opinion, he is the greatest preaching evangelist alive today. He has been of tremendous benefit to many Primitive Baptist Elders as well as church members and has strengthened the Lord's churches all across America. He has been a great blessing to us all.

I would like to express my appreciation to Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., and Curtis C. Thomas, the only surviving author of the excellent book *The Five Points of Calvinism*, for giving me approval to copy several portions of their book into my document. This historically accurate presentation of the proclamation published by the Synod of Dort in 1619 makes it easier to distinguish between Reformed Theology (Calvinism) and Primitive Baptist Theology.

My granddaughter Rachael and her husband Robbie Mundy have been of great benefit to me as proofreaders correcting my poor and unprofessional grammar.

Finally, my present pastor Elder Dwayne Hooven is also my valued advisor. He too has offered suggestions and corrections to this document. Since he and his family moved to Augusta, he has been a great blessing to our whole congregation at Augusta Old Line Primitive Baptist Church.

Revised January 2004

Elder David Guttery, Primitive Baptist pastor in Centre, Alabama, was most helpful in suggesting Ephesians 5:25-27 be eliminated on page 109. There is some question as to how relative or correct these Bible verses are in making the argument that is being presented on these pages.

Elder Harold Hunt, Primitive Baptist Elder from Maryville, Tennessee, suggested changes to Chapter XVII, The Parable of the Sower. The assistance from these two Elders is greatly appreciated.

Dedicated to...

...Billie, my wife of fifty-three years, November 27, 2006. She is a wonderful wife, as well as a valuable advisor. She is sensitive to the feelings of others, and so is most helpful in my effort to not be offensive in my writing. She loves people and is loved by everyone who knows her. God surely blessed me to find her...to be the wife of my youth, as well as wife of my old age.

...

Foreword

Two primary goals will hopefully be achieved before the reader puts this book away, and both goals must be proven from the Bible. First, the doctrinal paradox recognized by many respected theologians regarding the sovereignty of God in eternal salvation...versus...the exercise of man's "free will" so as to make eternal salvation effective, must be solved. This solution is based on an ancient Bible doctrine, but to be successful, this doctrine must be fully supported by scripture throughout the Bible.

Success with solving the first goal leads to the second. An attempt will be made to show the possibility that one's religion is not involved in eternal salvation even though it greatly affects one's welfare during their lifetime. Hopefully this can be proven, because it would answer for us the question, will all our non Christian friends spend eternity in a flaming hell?

This book will contain four sections. The purpose of the sections is to present the material somewhat like four separate books that are all related regarding the goals to be accomplished. Hopefully this arrangement has made the material easier to understand.

Chapters from my books *Resolving Bible Dilemmas* and *Bible Doctrine Issues* have been revised and included in this book since they make a contribution to the arguments presented. Also, the word "doctrine" will be mentioned many times. What is "doctrine?" Think of it as the steel girders which support a tall skyscraper. In a similar manner the proper doctrine provides a structure which supports all Bible verses in a way that harmonizes scripture without contradictions.

Since I do not expect everyone to agree with the meaning assigned to every verse quoted, I invite readers to give me an explanation as to their interpretation. I need and want constructive criticism. Please send any comments to Tom Hagler, 5 Somerset Court, Augusta, GA 30909.

I do not claim that my thoughts are original on the meaning of Bible verses or Bible subjects. While I may be guilty of expressing myself poorly, I have been blessed to hear preaching and to read material from some of the most capable preachers anywhere. Hopefully their thoughts have been represented faithful to the true Bible meaning.

This book is for my friends with the hope they may become excited to learn of an ancient Baptist doctrine overlooked by many today that allows Bible verses to fit together and harmonize in a logical and God-honoring way without a serious paradox.

For a brief history of ancient Baptists, see the Appendix beginning on page 232. The Welsh 1655 Midland Confession of Faith and a modern Primitive Baptist Articles of Faith is also included.

My skill in writing is poor. Even so, as an engineer, I hope the Bible verses provided are arranged in a logical way so that Scripture makes the doctrinal arguments. God is not the author of confusion. This harmonizing of the different passages unlocks the message the Lord has preserved for his children, and makes reading the Bible much more enjoyable and profitable.

For one final thought, Acts 17:2 states, "*And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures.*" Let's follow this example, and reason together from Scripture.

Tom Hagler

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Section I Paradox Problem

The four chapters under Section I will attempt to define the doctrinal paradox as noted by many respected theologians that is based on Bible scripture. In Chapter I a solution will be offered that reconciles all scripture surrounding the salvation of God's people eternally as well as during one's lifetime, thereby solving the paradox. A challenge against this solution will be reviewed in detail in Chapter II so that the reader can decide for himself if the solution offered is in fact supported by Bible scripture. In Chapter III the five doctrines of grace as believed by ancient Baptists contain no paradox and will be compared to the "Five Points of Calvinism" which is very similar but does contain the paradox. Finally, in Chapter IV, all stages involved in the salvation of God's people will be briefly reviewed to offer more detail to assist in understanding the solution to the paradox. This solution also proves that one's religious practice has nothing to do with eternal salvation even though it does offer a tremendous benefit and deliverance to the child of God during one's lifetime.

When considering the various Christian denominations, it reminds one of *The Blind Men and the Elephant* (1877 by John Godfrey Saxe, 1816-1887), *A Hindoo Fable*. This sarcastic writing has been labeled "The Barb of Satire." It compares the different Christian denominations who each claim to have the truth of salvation to the six blind men. When it comes to Bible doctrine, if we are not careful, we too will be like the blind men. Therefore, we need to "*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15).

Chapter I

Doctrinal Paradox Defined and Solved

Salvation must be one of the most important subjects in the Bible. However, many noted theologians agree that a scriptural paradox exists between Bible verses dealing with the sovereignty of God in eternal salvation (God working completely alone without assistance from any human) and Bible verses that appear to state the responsibility required by man if his eternal “salvation” is to become effective.

If the Bible clearly states God does work totally alone and unassisted in eternal salvation on behalf of His elect children, then not even one Bible verse would refute this position. No Bible verse will state man must assist in regeneration to make it effective by repenting, living a Godly life, confessing Christ as Saviour, being baptized or performing other similar good works. Even the exercise of one’s God given faith (fruit of Spirit, Galatians 5:22-23) is declared to be a “work,” as follows: *“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;”* (1 Thessalonians 1:3). Regardless, even though the above actions are very important, they must refer to the works necessary for a salvation that delivers one to something other than eternal salvation, or there would be a scriptural contradiction, or paradox. If this is true, there will be no paradox. For now, consider the above good works are actions for a child of God that lead to gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord’s church, and they yield an aspect of salvation experienced during one’s lifetime that we will call conditional time “salvation.”

An excellent book entitled *Creation Evangelism* by Ken Ham mentions the above paradox concerning salvation. In the back of this book, the following description of the author is given: “Ken Ham is the executive director and co-founder of Answers in Genesis, a ministry dedicated to defending the Bible from the very first verse.” Notice what Ken Ham writes on page 44 of the above book:

- “Over and over again, the prophets, apostles, and Jesus Christ Himself called upon people to come to God in repentance. The word literally means to change one’s mind. At the same time, Scripture plainly states, *‘As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seek after God’* (Romans 3:10-11). And in Ephesians 2:1 we read: *‘And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.’* The word ‘dead’ in this passage is the same word used when Lazarus (John 11) is described as being dead. Dead persons can’t do anything on their own. Therefore, of ourselves, we can’t do anything to come to Christ. But Romans 10:9 states: *‘That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.’* There are, of course, many other passages that we could examine. Personally, I don’t think any of us will ever fully understand the above paradox. We are sinful finite beings, trying to understand the mind of the infinite Creator. We do know that we are commanded to preach (Romans 10) and that *‘it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.’* (1 Corinthians 1:21).”

We must understand that it is man's theology that has created the paradox by not *"rightly dividing the Word of truth."* (2 Timothy 2:15) There are no contradictions in the Bible or the Bible would be divided against itself. In Matthew 12:25-29 Jesus explains how anything divided against itself cannot stand, *"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: etc."* Obviously the Bible, which is the Word of Truth, could never be divided against itself by saying God is sovereign (needing no human help) in the eternal salvation of His children, but then turn right around and tell us of "works" one must perform so as to make his eternal salvation effective.

Notice this seeming paradox very closely. Many verses in the Bible allow no place for man to perform righteous works, as follows:

- Titus 3:5 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"*

Similar verses confirm this same principle:

- 2 Timothy 1:9 *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"*
- Ephesians 2:8-9 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*

A contrast of the above verses to the following will clearly show why God's sovereignty and man's "free will" is a problem that is called a paradox by many theologians:

- Romans 10:13 *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."*

If the works called for by Romans 10:13 had to do with actions necessary to make eternal salvation effective for a child of God, then it would be a "works" salvation, the Bible would have a contradiction by being divided against itself, and the person would have something to boast about.

Billy Graham made note of this paradox years ago on "The Hour of Decision" radio program. His subject was "Christian Decision," and he made these comments: "The Scripture teaches that God turns men to Himself, but men are also exhorted to turn themselves to God." He then observes, "It is the old paradox of grace and free will."

Several Protestant denominations considered

Now consider very briefly the doctrinal beliefs of several Protestant denominations. Methodist beliefs seem to downplay the sovereignty of God in eternal salvation and strongly emphasize the things man must do in obedience to God's commandments in order to be saved (which they mistakenly think is eternal salvation). They then teach this "eternal salvation" gained by their works can be lost by later turning away in rebellion against God.

A Southern Baptist would agree with some of the Methodist beliefs. They both believe Jesus died for all human beings, and if one would "accept Jesus," inviting Him into their heart, they will be saved eternally. However

a Southern Baptist would say eternal salvation can never be lost. Other denominations have various changes and emphases, but they all agree that this paradox exists and attempt to get around it one way or another. Mostly, they just ignore the paradox, and say just as Ken Ham said, “we are sinful finite beings, trying to understand the mind of the infinite Creator,” saying this paradox is just one of the mysteries of the Bible. No, one must rightly divide the Word, and then there is no paradox relative to salvation.

The Presbyterians are very strong in acknowledging the sovereignty of God in eternal salvation. However, they then say that God, in His sovereign power, will insure every elect person (Ephesians 1:4) will hear the gospel preached during their lifetime, and will believe and obey the message. Further, the Presbyterians say the primary means of eternal salvation is the quickening power of the Holy Spirit which gives the person a new heart and results in the individual being born again. They then say that God uses “secondary means,” such as the preaching of the gospel to bring the elect to Christ. In other words, eternal salvation is conditioned on our belief and obedience. However, since the power of God meets this condition for us, then salvation is all by the sovereignty of God.

The Presbyterian or “Calvinist” model may at first appear logical and give the impression that the paradox problem has been solved. However, the Bible gives examples of God’s children (heaven bound) who have rebelled against God through sinful acts that led to unbelief, and some large number have even died in this awful condition. Upon consideration of these Biblical examples (given on pages 27-39), one may have second thoughts regarding whether this doctrine is truly supported by Bible scripture.

Further, since most Christian denominations believe the gospel is used by God as a “means” to make eternal salvation effective, then many different situations are left unreconciled. What about those who die as infants (there is no scriptural defense for claiming there is an age of accountability)? What about those who have a mental deformity to prevent them from understanding the Bible message? What about those who live and die in a remote place without ever having heard the gospel? Surely God has a way to eternally save these people who are among the elect.

Conclusion

The purpose of this book is to state that there has always been a remnant of the Lord’s people who understood the answer to the above seeming paradox surrounding God’s sovereignty and the responsibility of man, and to offer the solution to those who may be interested. The answer is in the Bible itself, if one will only “rightly divide” it.

A man’s will and ability to be obedient to gospel commands are only for God’s born again children, as follows: *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* (1 Corinthians 1:18) For God’s born again children, gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord’s church offers a timely blessing that we will refer to as conditional time “salvation.” Since this aspect of salvation or deliverance is for this lifetime only for God’s children (and it can be lost later due to disobedience), then this type salvation offers us the solution to the paradox. Chapter II will present a challenge to conditional time “salvation” that will give the reader a better opportunity to see if this solution is supported by Bible scripture.

Another point we need to remember is that Christ is the only mediator between God and man, not religion. Elder Michael Gowens has written an excellent booklet on this subject titled *Christ, The Only Mediator, Revisiting the "External Means Of Grace" Question*. He opens this small book by quoting the follows Bible verse:

- 1 Timothy 2:5 *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"*

Notice the above Bible verse says Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. It does not say Christ plus a willing sinner, or Christ plus the preacher, or Christ plus the church, or Christ plus any combination of the above. Jesus Christ is simply the only mediator.

I take the above Bible verse to mean God is totally sovereign in eternal salvation, and that man's religious practice plays no role at all. While the proper worship of Jesus Christ is not the means to obtain eternal life, it offers the child of God a great salvation that affects his health, length of life, and happiness. In fact, as Elder Hunt has said, "gospel salvation has nothing to do with our eternal destiny, but it has everything to do with our welfare in this life. The well being of individuals and nations, of entire civilizations and cultures, are impacted by the influence of the gospel. Every other consideration fades into nothingness compared with the influence of the gospel."

For the reader to be fully persuaded on the concept that has been presented, there are many more Bible verses that must be considered. Hopefully the remaining chapters of this book will offer the evidence that will be sufficient for providing of this proof.

Chapter II Challenge to Temporal “Salvation”

On June 30, 2002, a Primitive Baptist pastor we will call Elder Adam (to keep the name confidential) preached the first of a two part sermon entitled “Rethinking My Position on Time Salvation.” Part 2 was preached July 7th. He explains his change in belief concerning what he called the Primitive Baptist doctrine of conditional time “salvation.”

The arguments in the sermon noted above by Elder Adam, a Primitive Baptist pastor, could have just as easily been made by a PCA Presbyterian preacher since their beliefs on this subject are almost exactly the same. In fact, during the last two years, as I discussed Bible doctrine with a good friend that is a PCA Presbyterian preacher, he made many of the same comments and arguments as was made by Elder Adam in his sermon.

Primitive Baptists believe the aspect of salvation we call conditional time “salvation” is available to the child of God if they are fortunate enough to hear the gospel preached and are obedient to the gospel unto conversion to discipleship in the Lord’s church. However, Primitive Baptists believe most of God’s children never become disciples of Christ. Elder Adam would say most of the elect would hear, believe and obey the gospel while the PCA position would be that all hear, believe and obey.

Now again, what is conditional time “salvation?” It is gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord’s church that offers the obedient child of God a salvation or deliverance during their lifetime. Elder Michael Gowens wrote an excellent book titled *Temporal “Salvation,” A Bogus or*

Biblical Concept in which he pointed out that while “conditional time salvation” is not in the Bible by this label, neither are the words “Divine sovereignty,” “total depravity,” or “trinity.” Nevertheless, the Bible teaches these concepts and most believers embrace the terms. Elder Gowens observed that labels lead to prejudice, and prejudice leads to blindness. Hopefully this label will not be misleading so that blindness prevents a proper understanding. If it helps, every time “conditional time salvation” appears, just substitute the phrase “gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord’s church for a blessing in this lifetime.” The term broken down simply means that gospel salvation is conditional and must be enjoyed in a finite time period, namely one’s physical lifetime.

Elder Adam began his sermon with some very good advice. He quotes the following Bible verse:

- Acts 17:11 *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

My goal is to follow the above advice, and to see if Elder Adam is on “solid ground” as he attempts to refute the Primitive Baptist doctrine of conditional temporal or time “salvation.”

Part One

Elder Adam begins by saying that he has been a Primitive Baptist pastor for twenty years, and during this time he has vigorously preached the doctrine of conditional time “salvation,” and believed it. He then goes on to say he has since come to see that perhaps some errors exist in this

doctrine, and that at least the emphasis is wrong. He says he has spent many hours and frankly many years in the study of this topic, and therefore this sermon is the overflow from that effort. He said it is humbling to go before a congregation and admit he has been wrong. Based on these and other opening comments, obviously he is thoroughly convinced that conditional time "salvation" is not supported by Bible scripture.

To begin his argument, Elder Adam quotes a verse in the gospel of John that he says puts a finger on this subject. He says that in this verse the apostle John gives his reason for writing the book of John. (He does not explain how he came to that conclusion.) Consider the following verse:

- John 20:31 *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."*

Elder Adam says that whatever else this verse says or implies, it lets us know that belief in Christ and eternal life are married...they are joined together. (Note that the verse does not say eternal life...it just says life.) He then quotes Matthew 19:6, *"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."* He says he'd like to suggest that conditional time "salvation" tends to put these "things asunder." Therefore, Elder Adam is stating based on this verse that gospel preaching and our belief that Jesus is the Christ are essentially always joined together with eternal life. I believe Primitive Baptists would say this condition is rare, with most of God's children dying young, being mentally incapable, having never heard the gospel preached, or having heard the gospel but because of worldly cares, choose not to obey the commandments.

Cause and effect

Before we can fully understand what Elder Adam means by saying belief and eternal life are married (joined together into one) we should first understand the principle of cause and effect. Elder Sonny Pyles of Graham, Texas has preached on this subject several times (see Section II, page 61). This principle applies when attempting to combine our belief in Christ and eternal life into one.

Belief in Christ cannot be both the cause as well as the effect of eternal life. It must be either one or the other. For real world examples of cause and effect, consider a person that has a high fever. A medical doctor would say the fever is an effect or evidence of some sickness. The doctor would then look for the cause of this problem. The doctor would never consider the fever to be the cause of the sickness. It is impossible for something to be both the cause as well as the effect of an occurrence.

Let's consider another real world example. Imagine that an electric lamp does not work. The fact that the lamp does not work is the symptom or effect that points you back to the cause of the problem. The cause may be a burned out light bulb, faulty wiring, a popped circuit breaker, etc. You could not say that the lack of light is the cause of the problem. No light when the lamp is turned on is the effect.

Elder Adam later says (pages 26, 40) belief is a "condition" of eternal life, but God meets this condition. If it is a condition, then it is a cause. His argument fails, because God who cannot lie says belief is the effect or evidence of eternal life. We should take the time now to prove with Bible verses that our belief is always the effect or evidence of eternal life. Our belief cannot possibly be both the cause

(and a condition that must be met) as well as the effect or evidence. Consider the following:

- 1 John 5:1 *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."*
Our belief is evidence that eternal life already exists.
- John 5:24 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*
- John 6:47 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."*
- Acts 13:48 *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."*

Our faith is listed as one of the nine *"fruit of the Spirit"* given in the following verse:

- Galatians 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."*

The fruit of an apple tree is an apple. First there must be the apple tree, and then later the tree produces the apple as fruit. In the same way a person must first be born of the Spirit, then this person will possess the fruit of the Spirit...the seventh fruit listed being faith. A person could not exercise his faith (which he does not have) by believing that Jesus is the Christ until after he has been born of the Spirit of God and received faith as the fruit of the Spirit.

If someone were to say that all people have a little faith, one must then point out that the Bible clearly states all people do not have faith. The Bible verse which says exactly that is as follows:

- 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2 *“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.”*

For this reason the gospel is delivered by a child of God who has faith to other of God’s children who also have faith. The gospel cannot be delivered from those who have faith to those who are without faith. Notice what is stated by Romans 1:17 *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”* In others words the gospel is the power of God only to regenerate children of God who have faith. 1 Corinthians 1:18 also says exactly that, as follows: *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”*

Finally, there is a problem with the theory that believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is something a person must do to obtain eternal life. I would question why Jesus made the following statements in the gospel of John:

- John 10:25-28 *“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

- John 8:46-47 *"Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."*

Jesus clearly states to His audience that they cannot hear or believe because they are not God's children. It is not a matter of their decision for Christ. The problem is they have no spiritual life. Why did Jesus not quote to these people the verse given us by Elder Adam in John 20:31 *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name?"* Obviously John 20:31 does not apply to the unregenerate by stating they need to believe so they can obtain eternal life.

Therefore, whatever else John 20:31 may mean, it cannot teach our belief is the cause or is a condition that must be met for one to receive eternal life.

To God's children the gospel offers a life (not eternal life) that is more abundant and fulfilling. This life is "conditional" based on understanding the gospel message and obedience to its commandments. This is one meaning of "life" in John 20:31. Consider the following:

- John 10:10 *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

The abundant life might also be described as conditional temporal or time "salvation."

Another verse that applies to John 20:31 is as Follows:

- Matthew 7:13-14 *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

The life referred to in John 20:31 is not eternal life, but it is a life that one enjoys from living in the “*narrow way*” free from destruction (physical death as noted in 1 Corinthians 3:17, *“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”*). It is the “*abundant*” life (mentioned in John 10:10) in fellowship with Christ in His church.

Life in time versus eternal life

Elder Adam then makes more statements which I need to consider. The first of four points discussed in the first day of his sermon is as follows: 1) He says “the doctrine of conditional time ‘salvation’ suggests that no conditional verse in the Bible has any eternal implications.” For emphasis, he repeats that statement. Next he says that a conditional verse would state that if you do this, then such will happen. For example, consider John 8:31, *“If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.”* Conditional verses place a great deal of responsibility upon us as people. Conditional time “salvation” suggests that those type verses could not have eternal or heavenly ramifications because you end up with a “works” salvation, which he agrees is a valid point. In addition, he says time “salvation” suggests that there are actually two salvations taught in the Bible. There is one salvation for heaven, which is all of grace, and one salvation for time (that’s where we get conditional time “salvation”) which is largely

depended upon our works. Again, he says there is some validity to that idea.

A Primitive Baptist would answer the above statement by saying there is only one salvation, but that salvation incorporates three tenses of time...past, present (our lifetime) and future. The past is what God did for the elect (as listed in Romans 8:28-30). The present involves our possible obedience to the light that we have which may lead to conversion unto disciples of Christ in the Lord's church. The future after death involves our final conformity to Christ in glorification. These three tenses of salvation are given in the following verse:

- 2 Corinthians 1:10 "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;"

Elder Adam then moves to his next point. 2) He says conditional time "salvation" builds a wall of separation between eternity and time. Elder Adam explains this by saying, "Oh this verse applies to eternity and that verse applies to time, as if the two don't meet." He goes on to say that one of the first things he began to realize in his journey through this subject was that we talk about the after-life as if it is another life, and it isn't. It is all one eternal life. If you are born again, then you currently have been given eternal life. Jesus says that whoever believes on me will never die. He doesn't mean the body will never die, but you have been given something that will live on forever in fellowship with God for eternity. Conditional time "salvation" tends to build a wall between eternity and time which Elder Adam says he does not think the scripture supports. A wall is built between the objective reality of salvation and the subjective experience of salvation. The objective reality of salvation is that it really happens in your

future, while the subjective experience of salvation is how you feel about salvation in your heart.

Elder Adam says that the most disturbing part of temporal “salvation” is when it is taken in its extreme form. 3) Time salvation suggests that many of God’s people never come to an awareness of their salvation, or never come to know Jesus Christ as their saviour. They never produce fruit, but essentially live in a spiritual vegetative state all their life. He then gives the example of an American Indian that worships an idol. One may then take this idol worship as evidence the Indian is born again. However, he did agree that there may have been some American Indians who were born again, but their worship of an idol was not evidence of this fact. He did not explain how he believed this exception could occur in an American Indian who had never heard the gospel preached during his lifetime, but was still regenerated by God giving him eternal life. If he had explained why and how this “exception” takes place, then we could ask why it does not always occur in this manner. We know from John 3:8 that being born again is compared to the unpredictable wind and *“so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* The Bible does not define exceptions. Primitive Baptists believe the Bible teaches there are many regenerate people (Revelation 7:9), but only a few of God’s children are ever converted by gospel preaching and obedience unto discipleship in the Lord’s church.

In an effort to clarify his position, Elder Adam quotes a statement by Dr. Billy Graham made Saturday May 31, 1997 over a Southern California television station. Dr. Graham says “I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they are conscious of it or not, they’re members of the Body of Christ.” Dr. Graham goes on to

say God is "calling people out of the world for His Name, whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or from the non-believing world, they are members of the Body of Christ because they've been called by God. They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their hearts that they need something they don't have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven." Primitive Baptists doctrine defends the position that was made by Dr. Billy Graham (We wonder what defense Dr. Graham would use). Elder Adam then makes the point he does not believe a child of God can be born again but not be aware of this fact. In effect, he says, "how could you love Jesus Christ as your Saviour, but not be aware it is Christ you love?" This then leads to his fourth point. 4) The above position on salvation has election, predestination, regeneration (calling), justification, and glorification. There is no place given for sanctification.

My answer to the third and fourth points is to suggest one read Romans 8:28-30. Election, predestination, etc. are listed without conversion and sanctification because only a few of the elect are blessed to hear the gospel and even fewer still are obedient unto conversion. Next, I've heard it said that after Helen Keller was converted by the gospel, she said as long as she could remember she had loved Jesus Christ, but she just did not know His name. She was comforted by Christ through the Holy Spirit.

Elder Adam does not think it possible for a born again person that has never heard the gospel preached to be truly saved eternally, since this person could not be aware of his salvation. I disagree. The born again person who has never heard the gospel preached will still be aware of the

change that has taken place in his life as a result of his regeneration, even though he will not know details about the life of Jesus Christ. Let's consider the born again person who lives and dies without ever hearing the gospel preached. In order to see the effect of regeneration on this person, and how God deals with him, consider God is in the person and puts His laws in the person's mind:

- 1 Corinthians 3:16 *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"*
- Hebrews 8:10 *"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."*

Notice the way in which God judges:

- Romans 2:12-15 *"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"*

The extent of God's judgment:

- Luke 12:47-48 *"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be*

much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

We next remember the warfare between man's carnal nature and his born again spiritual nature:

- Romans 7:14-17 *"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."*

The above outlines how God deals with His born again children who have never heard the gospel preached. At regeneration, God's Holy Spirit dwells within them (1 Corinthians 3:16), His Laws have been written in their heart and mind (Hebrews 8:10), then God allows *"their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another"* (Romans 2:12-15) so that through chastening based on the understanding they have (Luke 12:47-48), God has begun a process of sanctification through the Holy Spirit even though these people have never heard the gospel preached or even know God's name. Regeneration makes a big difference in the life of a child of God even without the gospel as it did with Helen Keller.

Regeneration (eternal salvation) by God of the elect (Ephesians 1:4-6) is not a process. It does not involve the gospel or require the obedience of the child of God. Regeneration is something that is instantaneous and occurs between conception and death. It is referred to as a translation:

- Colossians 1:13 *“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:”*

Regeneration is referred to as a quickening:

- Ephesians 2:1 *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:”*

After regeneration, God’s children have the ability to hear, understand and believe things of God. Since God’s children are human and not robots, they have the ability to either be obedient to God’s commandments (written in their heart at regeneration and in some cases also verbally by gospel preaching, if one is so blessed) or to rebel and be disobedient. While disobedience will be chastened by God as in Hebrews 10:26-31 and Hebrews 12:5-11, the child of God will still be in heaven after death.

To say God, who *“is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12), cannot make His presence known to a regenerate person just because he has never been exposed to the gospel, is insane. God does not need the help of any human to achieve His desire in saving the elect of God for eternity as well as a timely deliverance for the obedient. If we were involved in eternal salvation, then some of the nicest people would spend eternity in hell, and some of the worst and most evil “politically correct” people would be in heaven.

Along this same line, Elder Adam quotes the familiar verse that says we must work out our own salvation, as follows:

- Philippians 2:12-13 *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God*

which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The shocking part is that Elder Adam takes salvation in this verse to be regeneration and we must "work it out." Surely he knows this doctrine would be a "works" salvation not allowed by several other verses, and clearly condemned by Titus 3:5 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"* I would like to ask Elder Adam what he thinks *"fear and trembling"* means in the above verse. He argues that God is "in us" to insure that we do work it out. But the verse implies we may fail to *"work it out,"* and if we fail, something very bad would happen. If eternal salvation is under consideration in Philippians 2:12-13 then our failure to "work it out" would condemn us to the eternal flames of hell. If God is "in us," then we know that we can never lose our eternal salvation. However, we can lose our conditional time "salvation." This verse must refer to the "abundant life" (John 10:10) or the "narrow way" (Matthew 7:13-14) of conditional time "salvation," and any failure on our part to "work it out" would result in "destruction" (death) or our losing the joy of our salvation in this life (Psalms 51:12).

The above comments by Elder Adam on Philippians 2:12-13 make me want to respond by saying how foolish a comment, *"having begun in the Spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh?"* Paul made this statement as follows:

- Galatians 3:3 *"Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?"*

Any failure of God's children to *"work out his own salvation"* will mean he will suffer the chastening rod of God described as follows:

- Hebrews 12:5-11 *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

At the end of the sermon on June 30th, Elder Adam made the following statement: “It comes down to the question then...the key question we will try to deal with next week...here is the question. Will all of God’s children believe in Jesus? The answer in the Bible is an unequivocal yes.” He then refers back to John 20:31, and states that what ever else this verse means, it lets us know that believing and eternal life are “married.” The problem here as mentioned before, John 20:31 states only “life,” and not “eternal life.” Life in this verse is the abundant life of John 10:10. It is the “life” described in Matthew 7:13-14 concerning our entering the “strait gate” and living in the “narrow way.” The broad way leads to destruction or physical death.

Part Two

Elder Adam opens the worship service July 7th with prayer. He then gives a brief review of the four points he presented the week before on June 30th as follows: conditional time "salvation" 1) requires that no conditional verses have eternal consequences, 2) builds a wall of separation between time and eternity, 3) contends that most of the elect never know Christ and produce fruit, and 4) contains election, predestination, regeneration (calling), justification, and glorification, but allows no place for conversion and sanctification.

He said these four points express the reasons he has become convinced that the Bible does not support the Primitive Baptist doctrine of conditional time "salvation." I assume he believes in gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord's church, but with conversion following regeneration in almost every case during this lifetime. However, he should know John 3:8 compares the regeneration of every child of God to the action of the wind.

Next, to continue with his sermon, he agrees that salvation is entirely, exclusively, fully and totally by the grace of God. He says it is impossible for us to hold any other view because the Bible totally locks us into that view. Salvation is totally by grace. However, when there are conditions attached to verses that seem to have eternal implications, we are left wondering if we have been wrong about salvation by works after all. (That is a shocking comment by Elder Adam!)

He then says we can approach this challenge in a couple of ways. One way is the condition of belief. Belief and faith are important in eternal salvation, but then we may say

God could save a person whether or not he has faith. (He forgets faith always follows regeneration because it is a fruit of the Spirit.) Elder Adam said “God is able to save a person whether or not he believes in Jesus, but God is not in the habit of doing that, Biblically speaking.” He suggested one way to resolve this problem is by saying faith is not important, and has only temporal implications, which is the way it is resolved in the conditional time “salvation” model.

Elder Adam then said he would like to offer an alternative. Another solution to the problem is that belief in Jesus is very important, faith is very much a part of salvation, and that this belief is very much a condition (he said “if I could use that term”); however, grace is so great that it will see that the condition is met in all the elect. God will draw us to Himself...that is what the Bible says. God will ravish us with His beauty so that we ultimately come to the point that we say I have no other alternative than to believe on this wonderful Son Jesus. Elder Adam said he would propose that the later is more in line with Biblical teaching than the former. It underscores the power of grace to bring unbelieving sinners to believe in Jesus. Notice what Elder Adam is proposing. He says that belief in Jesus is a condition of eternal salvation. In other words, our belief that Jesus is the Christ is the cause of Eternal life. In 1 John 5:1, John 5:24, John 6:47 and Acts 13:48, God says our belief is the evidence or effect that one is already born again. Since it is impossible for belief to be both the cause as well as the effect of eternal life, God would not contradict Himself by making belief a condition of eternal life. God cannot lie!

I must stop here to refute his argument by saying that our faith is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Before we

are born again, in every case, we have no faith. Faith always follows regeneration. After we are born again, we have the Spirit of God in us, along with the nine fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23, the seventh fruit listed being faith. As Hebrews 11:1 says, *"faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* At regeneration, God has put His laws into our mind and has written them in our heart (Hebrews 8:10). Therefore, even those who have not heard the gospel preached (have never heard the name of Jesus Christ) would still have faith. Based on this, I say in every case the regenerate person has faith, but not all of them believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They have the ability to believe the gospel if it is ever preached to them; however, even in that case, after hearing the gospel preached, they still may rebel in unbelief.

God's children guilty of unbelief

All of the above leads us to another very important point. Elder Adam made the statement that belief in Christ is a condition that must be met if one is to have eternal life. Recall the first day as he began this sermon, he referred to John 20:31 *"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."* He compared belief in Christ and eternal life in the above verse to being one as in marriage. Because Elder Adam believes eternal life and belief in Christ are inseparable, he cannot believe that a child of God could ever become an unbeliever. I disagree. The Bible is very clear that children of God can become so sinful in their walk of life (in rebellion against God) that they become guilty of the sin of unbelief. They can even die in

this awful condition. The following section is devoted to this important subject.

We need to refer to several verses that prove the child of God can be guilty of unbelief. Consider the following:

- 2 Timothy 2:10-13 *“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”*

Paul says he endures all things for the elect’s sake (those chosen by God before the foundation of the world...Ephesians 1:4-6) so that they may obtain something in addition to eternal glory. As elect children of God, they are assured of eternal glory. If these children of God choose to deny Christ, Paul said Christ would deny them (meaning their prayers). However, if these children of God go one step further in rebellion against God and become guilty of unbelief, then Paul says God would abide faithful because God could not deny Himself. These rebellious unbelieving children will suffer in this life, but they will still go to heaven after death. To better understand what the Bible says about suffering in this life for God’s rebellious children, consider the following scripture:

- Hebrews 10:26-31 *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two*

or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "His people" refers to God's children who lose the joy of their salvation.

Another verse that states God's children can be guilty of the sin of unbelief is as follows:

- Romans 3:3-4 *"For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged."*

Next, let's consider actual examples in the Bible where God's children were guilty of unbelief, and this unbelief cost them their happiness and in many cases it cost them their physical lives. We hope to prove that all the children of Israel Moses led out of Egypt were regenerate children of God. Notice the following description (all is mentioned five times):

- 1 Corinthians 10:1-12 *"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that*

followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

The above description that all the children of Israel led out of Egypt by Moses includes the fact that they ...*"all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."* (1 Corinthians 10:3-4) This refers to the body and blood of Christ as Jesus Himself stated as follows:

- John 6:53-56 *"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."*

For added proof that the Israelites Moses led out of Egypt were God's children, notice the reference to this event in Hebrews. It begins "*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,*" meaning it is addressed to God's children. It then refers to Moses and the Israelites:

- Hebrews 3:7-12 "*Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*"

Note! Paul says in Hebrews 3:12 "brethren" (brethren are born again) can be guilty of "*an evil heart of unbelief.*" Entering into God's rest refers to fellowship with God in His church, and not fellowship with God in heaven.

Finally, the gross sins the children of Israel were guilty of while in the wilderness were called sins of unbelief in Jude, as follows:

- Jude 1:5 "*I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.*"

It is most important to notice that Jude 5 above refers to Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, and that God "*afterward destroyed them that believed not.*" All those destroyed by God in the wilderness must have been God's

born again children because God would not destroy any unregenerate for unbelief. We remember Jesus told some unregenerate people *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.”* (John 10:26) The unregenerate do not believe because they are not God’s born again children (sheep). Their *“carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* (Romans 8:7) God destroys His children (takes their physical life) if they are guilty of gross sins as follows:

- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”*

God does not eternally destroy His children. God’s children cannot lose their eternal life, but they will suffer in this life and die physically if they defile their bodies with gross sins. This was the fate of many of God’s children given in the example of the children of Israel Moses led out of Egypt.

The Old Testament offers another great example of a child of God who rebelled against God to such an extent that the scripture says he became an enemy of God, and died in this condition. This man was King Saul whose reign preceded King David. In order to prove that Saul was born again and had been given a new heart, consider how this series of verses begins in 1 Samuel 10:1 *“Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the LORD hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?”* Notice now what Samuel says to Saul in the following Bible verses:

- 1 Samuel 10:6-10 *“And the spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And let*

it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee. And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and show thee what thou shalt do. And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day. And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them."

After reading the above Bible verses, could anyone doubt that Saul was a born again child of God? God gave him a new heart! Now, let's see the end of Saul's life after he had become an enemy of God. It was before a great battle with the Philistines in which Saul feared the outcome. Samuel was now dead. Saul went to the witch at En-dor, a woman that had a familiar spirit, to request that she bring up Samuel (1 Samuel 28:11). After Samuel was brought up, and Saul explained in the 15th verse how he was soon to face the Philistines in battle, and God had departed from him and answered him no more, so that now he wanted to know what he should do. We read the following:

- 1 Samuel 28:16-19 *"Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? And the LORD hath done to him, as he spake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the LORD,*

nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the LORD also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines.”

While Samuel's body was dead in the grave, it was Samuel's spirit who was speaking to Saul. Obviously Samuel said that tomorrow Saul would be with him in heaven. Even though Saul had become an enemy of God and God had departed from him in this life, Saul's unbelief and rebellion could not cost him his eternal salvation. His sinful actions did cost him his temporal "salvation" that affected the length of his life and included the loss of God's blessings and comfort of the Holy Spirit. Saul's efforts in this life to "persevere" failed, but fortunately for Saul, he was "preserved" by God in Christ Jesus unto eternal salvation.

We should now consider three good examples of God's people who believe (they are born again), but who are not converted unto disciples of Christ. Even though they believe, they are not obedient to God's commandments. These people run the risk of God's chastisement. Consider the following:

- Acts 26:27-28 *“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”*

Since Paul said he knew Agrippa believed, Agrippa was born again. (1 John 5:1, Acts 13:48, and John 5:24) Even so, Agrippa chose not to become a disciple of Christ by

way of baptism. He was born again, but not converted. He chose to not become a Christian, as in Acts 11:26: *"And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."*

- Luke 22:31-32 *"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."*

We know Simon Peter was already born again as proven in Matthew 16:17. None of the disciples were entirely converted to a knowledge of the truth until after the death and resurrection of Jesus. We learn of their unbelief on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:21). This unbelief was resolved after the resurrection and Jesus appeared to them in person. Also, Jesus had prophesied earlier their memory of all things would be restored in John 14:26 stating that the Holy Spirit would *"...bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

- John 12:42-43 *"Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."*

The chief rulers believed (they were born again), but they would not "confess Christ", to receive conditional time "salvation" (conversion), as offered in Romans 10:9.

Another excellent example of unbelief by God's children is found in Luke 24:10-32 concerning the apostles on the road to Emmaus. Consider how this began in the 10th verse:

- Luke 24:10-11 *“It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.”*

Then we come to the 21st verse that says:

- Luke 24:21 *“But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.”*

Notice! The apostles on the road to Emmaus no longer believed that Jesus was the Son of God. Then, in the 25th verse Jesus says,

- Luke 24:25 *“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:”*

We need to remember that these apostles had been with Jesus and had seen the many great miracles that He had done. These miracles testified that Jesus was God manifest in flesh. In John 10:30, Jesus told them He was God *“I and my Father are one.”* If this unbelief could occur in the apostles after all they saw, is it not obvious that we could also be guilty of unbelief? Their unbelief was solved when they saw in person the risen Christ, and were reminded of *“all things”* (John 14:26) by the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately we have not seen the risen Christ. Further, we also remember that Thomas said he would not believe unless he could see the nail prints in the hands of Jesus and thrust his hand into His side. Thomas was still guilty of unbelief even though his fellow disciples testified they had seen the risen Christ.

There is another situation that a child of God in the Lord's church should be warned against. If he becomes guilty of sinful acts and "falls away," he may never be renewed unto repentance in this life. Consider the following Bible verses:

- Hebrews 6:4-6 *"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."*

A child of God by sinful acts can "fall away," and therefore they may not "persevere" in this life. Fortunately, as God's children, they are "preserved" by God in Christ Jesus, so their eternal security is assured. These rebellious children lose and cannot regain their conditional time "salvation." The above verse states, *"it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance;"*

Paul gives us another good example where born again Corinthian church members failed to "persevere" while alive, and their sinful acts cost them their physical life. Fortunately, they are "preserved" by God in Christ Jesus.

- 1 Corinthians 11:29-30 *"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."*

Consider another verse where church members did not “persevere,” and had their “faith overthrown.” Notice it says *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.”* While they do not persevere, they are preserved in Christ Jesus.

- 2 Timothy 2:17-20 *“And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.”* The Calvinist has only vessels of “gold” and “silver” in the “great house” in heaven.

There is another verse to consider that is especially good in pointing out how as children of God our sinful actions can cost us our physical life and God Himself will destroy us. Even so, while we may not “persevere” in this life, fortunately God has “preserved” us in Christ Jesus to assure our eternal salvation.

- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”*

Another verse that proves a converted child of God can become guilty of sinful acts and “fall away,” becoming a

"castaway" is 1 Corinthians 9:27. Notice what Paul says to the Corinthian Church:

- 1 Corinthians 9:27 *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."*

Paul did not fear being cast into hell, but that he would lose the joy of his salvation (as David expressed in Psalms 51:12). He would lose the comfort of the Holy Spirit and God's blessings in this life. He feared he may not "persevere" in this life, but he is "preserved" by God in Christ Jesus for eternal salvation.

The above verses should convince anyone that God's children can be guilty of the sin of unbelief. It may cost them their physical lives as with many of the children of Israel Moses led out of Egypt, but unbelief can never cost God's children their spiritual life. We are reminded in Philippians 1:6, *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* This verse refers only to eternal salvation, but not to conditional time "salvation." We saw in Hebrews 6:4-6 (page 37) that we could lose time "salvation" and God may never renew us to repentance. In others words, conditional time "salvation" can be lost.

The gospel of John on salvation

Elder Adam next said he would use the gospel of John, beginning in Chapter 3 to prove his case. He said that verse 36 obviously has eternal implications with the condition of belief attached, as follows:

- John 3:36 *“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

My answer is the regenerate as well as unregenerate can be unbelievers, as already proven. The verse states “*life,*” not eternal life. For the unbelieving regenerate child of God, he will have the wrath of God on him and will not enjoy the abundant life mentioned in John 10:10.

After giving several examples, Elder Adam says in his sermon that “belief is a condition of eternal life.” He says “belief is also an evidence of eternal life. It is both a condition and an evidence. This is only possible because God’s grace allows the condition to be met.” He says, “it is not by our works that we believe, but by His grace.” He said, “many of the verses we will consider appear to be only evidential, but they too are conditional. God’s grace meets the condition.” He said “this will be my thesis in this sermon.”

For my answer, we have proven the regenerate can be unbelievers. Also God states belief is the evidence of eternal life, and not the cause based on 1 John 5:1, John 5:24, John 6:47 and Acts 13:48. It is impossible for something to be both the cause of an event as well as the effect. His argument has failed. Saying God met the condition does not work. God said belief was the evidence or the effect. God, who cannot lie, would not contradict Himself by saying belief is a condition of eternal life.

Elder Adam then says, “will all the elect believe in Jesus...we can just completely eliminate any speculation at the top of the sermon, and say it is an unequivocal yes...all of the elect will believe in Jesus.” He wants us to

see it from scripture. After reading John 3:36 again, he asks that we turn to John 5:23:

- John 5:23 *"That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."*

He says you must honor the Son to honor the Father. You cannot have one without the other. He is making something we must do a requirement for eternal salvation. He thinks this theory of eternal salvation is not a "works salvation" because God's grace allows this condition to be met. When God says *"not by works of righteousness which we have done"* (Titus 3:5), I say God means not by works!!!

- John 5:24 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."*

Elder Adam says "what ever else the verse says; belief and everlasting life are married. The two come together, and you do not have one without the other. The message is that the believer is already saved eternally." His argument here fails again because as mentioned before, our belief is evidence of spiritual life. He must not realize (as has already been proven on pages 27-39) the regenerate can be guilty of unbelief. God gives the elect spiritual life, and then belief is possible. We have seen the many examples of regenerate children of God who are guilty of the sin of unbelief.

Elder Adam says the next verse is most important:

- John 6:35 *“And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”*

He says the words “*cometh*” and “*believeth*” are equated in this verse. But I say we have proven above that God has children who are unbelievers (pages 27-39). Also, come is not the same word as believe. This verse does not prove the words are interchangeable. Nothing could prove the words interchangeable.

He next says “if coming and believing are synonymous, in that they mean the same thing, and then that is very important to remember as we look at the next verse:”

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

He then says “since coming and believing have been proven to be the same thing, then this verse is saying, all that the Father giveth me shall believe in me.” Elder Adam reminds me of former President Bill Clinton saying it depends on what the meaning of is is. Everyone knows the meaning of both “come” as well as “belief.” Also, when Jesus gives eternal life to the elect, the elect’s belief is not involved. Consider what Jesus says in His prayer before He is crucified:

- John 17:2 *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”*

Notice that Jesus says He has power over all flesh, and He gives eternal life to a particular number of people. Who does He give eternal life to? He gave eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him--not one more and not one less. The person's belief is not involved. Jesus saves all those chosen by the Father "*before the foundation of the world*" (Ephesians 1:4).

Elder Adam continues with this line of reasoning. He says "every one of the elect given to the Son believe on Him, and when they do, everlasting life is their blessing." He says "a dead man cannot believe, but a live man can and must believe." My answer is that Jesus' decision to quicken a person to spiritual life through the Holy Spirit (John 6:63) is not conditioned on the individual's action or belief. Our belief is only an evidence of eternal salvation, not the cause (as it must be one or the other). Then, sadly, some of the regenerate that have the ability to believe, become guilty of the sin of unbelief.

Another important point Elder Adam is not considering in these sermons is that it is possible for someone to "preach another Jesus" and "another gospel." The Apostle Paul gives us an important warning, as follows:

- 2 Corinthians 11:4 "*For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.*"

Anyone would agree that an "Arminian" Jesus, who has only made a way of salvation possible for the whole human race, is not the Jesus we Primitive Baptist worship. It is a

different gospel than the one we believe. This gospel contends that if a person will only “accept” Christ as their personal saviour, and invite Him in their heart, then they will receive eternal salvation. Does Elder Adam think belief in this Christ will yield eternal salvation? What about the gospel and the Christ preached by the Roman Catholic Church? If Elder Adam is limiting eternal salvation to those who believe as Primitive Baptists, if that doctrine is true, then only a few will be in heaven, unlike what we read, as follows:

- *Revelation 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;”*

As an aside, I understand there are a total of just over 5,000 languages (“*tongues*”) in existence today, but the Bible has been translated into only about 2100 languages. In the past, the Bible was translated into much fewer than 2,100 languages. If God uses the gospel as a “means” to regenerate the elect, how has He saved all those people given in Revelation 7:9 who did not have the gospel in their tongue? Also, God has only one way to save the elect according to John 3:8. To further prove the gospel is not used by God in regeneration, see Chapter IX, What the Gospel is not, beginning on page 108.

Conclusion

I strongly disagree that anything we do in this life has any effect on eternal salvation. I suggest Elder Adam should not change the meaning of words. Next, he must consider all the actual examples in scripture of those children of God who were guilty of unbelief, with many dying in this

state. Further, how is his Calvinist doctrine going to allow eternal salvation for infants who die young, the mentally disabled, and those who never hear the gospel preached? These individuals must all be saved in the same way as everyone else, comparable to the action of uncontrollable wind according to John 3:8.

It is my conclusion that the Bible fully supports God's sovereignty in eternal salvation with man's gospel obedience being involved only in discipleship for church membership; thus, yielding time "salvation" for the child of God. As a result, there is no paradox between God's sovereignty and man's free will, so man's religious practice is not involved.

I do not believe that Elder Adam is "*rightly dividing the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15) He is preaching another gospel than the one I believe, and it is another Jesus and another spirit. Sadly, he has only a few in heaven, but at least he can try to claim that he helped God save some of the ones that are there. What a burden for any human to carry! I feel sorry for Elder Adam, and pray that he and the other elders who hold this doctrine will repent of their error, and return to God's true doctrine.

Chapter III

Five Doctrines of Grace

The ages old five doctrines of grace as believed by ancient Baptists defines the sovereignty of God in the eternal salvation of His elect children. Nothing in these five doctrines of grace have reference to things God's children must do during their lifetime. These beliefs are totally supported by scripture throughout the Bible. If the position presented is truly God's doctrine, then it will not be refuted by even one scripture in the Bible. There is no paradox.

The historic five doctrines of grace mentioned above states they apply only to eternal salvation. It may have been expressed better if it had explained that these five doctrines of grace apply only to the phases of salvation involving foreknowledge, predestination, called, justified, and glorified (as listed in Romans 8:28-30), and not the aspect of salvation called gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord' church. This means the five doctrines of grace apply equally to all of God's elect children, including infants that die before birth, the mentally handicapped and to those in remote parts of the world who never hear the gospel preached.

The many verses in the Bible that call on us to repent, to believe the gospel message and to be baptized, is directed to and is only of interest to God's children. The following verse suggests this:

- 1 Corinthians 1:18 *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; unto us which are saved it is the power of God."*

The gospel is for God's children (already born again) so as to offer a salvation in this life called gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord's church. It may also be referred to as conditional time "salvation" since the benefits and penalties are only experienced during one's lifetime.

The above solution of the paradox is consistent with life as we know it. In the physical world about us life must occur first, and then the person in time may be educated. In the spiritual world it is the same. First God gives spiritual life to His elect sometime between conception and death. After being born again, the child of God is able to hear (John 8:47), understand (1 Corinthians 2:14) and believe (John 10:25-30) things of God. However, God's children that are blessed to hear the gospel message may still reject it because of the various cares of life. This rejection of the gospel will not affect their eternal life, but it can have a drastic effect on their quality of physical life as well as length of life. One needs to understand how God chastens His rebellious children as noted in Hebrews 12:5-11 and Hebrews 10:26-31.

The doctrine believed by Martin Luther, John Calvin and the other great men of the Protestant Reformation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is called Reformed Theology. A brief outline of this doctrine is called "the five points of Calvinism." However, this doctrine combined the sovereignty of God in eternal salvation with works man must perform to be a disciple of Christ in the Lord's church. Since both were combined, this doctrine of necessity created a paradox. If God is totally sovereign in eternal salvation, then man cannot be involved in any way. Even so, there are Bible verses that appear to teach man does play some role with God (although most people are not aware of the concept of conditional time "salvation").

One should first be aware that Baptist churches all across Europe were never part of the Catholic Church, so it was not necessary that they “reform” or “protest” anything. In other words, they were not part of the Protestant Reformation. We believe the Protestant churches returned to a more literal interpretation of the Bible similar to that of the ancient Baptist churches. As individuals left the Catholic Church and formed the various Protestant denominations, they retained different errors from their former religious order. Primarily, their doctrines mixed the sovereignty of God verses with man’s free will. Even so, Martin Luther saw something of this error when he wrote his book *Bondage of the Will*. He saw that until the new birth, man’s will was in bondage to the flesh, as Romans 8:7 “*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.*”

In presenting the five doctrines of grace, the “Five Points of Calvin” (as the Protestants call them) will be copied, with the few changes necessary in order to correctly express God’s true Baptist doctrine. Any deletions will be noted in *italics*, as will any additions or corrections. A reason will be given for each change. Please notice that the few changes made are mostly involved with what man should do after he is born again. The purpose of presenting these beliefs in this manner is 1) to show how the doctrinal paradox is resolved and 2) to show how close the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation doctrine was to that of Primitive Baptists.

Material will be taken from an excellent book, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, by David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, published by Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co. The following history is given in this book about these Protestant beliefs. *In 1610, one year after the death of*

James Arminius (a Dutch seminary professor), his followers promoted his beliefs that were drawn up into five articles of faith. On November 13, 1618, a national Synod met at Dort to consider this "Remonstrance" (i.e. a protest). Attending the Great Synod, "there were 84 members and 18 secular commissioners. Included were 27 delegates from Germany, the Palatinate, Switzerland and England. The last of 154 sessions was held May 9, 1619.

After a very close examination of the five points, the above mentioned book states, "Failing to reconcile that teaching with the Word of God, which they had definitely declared could alone be accepted by them as the rule of faith, they had unanimously rejected them. They felt, however, that a mere rejection was not sufficient. It remained for them to set forth the true Calvinistic teaching in relationship to those matters which had been called into question. This they proceeded to do, embodying the Calvinistic position in five chapters which have ever since been known as the five points of Calvinism."

The above book by David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas lists the five points that were agreed to at the Synod of Dort, May 9, 1619. As an aside, one should remember that John Calvin, Martin Luther, and the other early leaders of the Protestant movement were dead at this particular time. These beliefs were essentially the beliefs of the non-Catholic world all across Europe in the year 1619.

Ancient Baptist Five Doctrines of Grace

The five points from the Synod of Dort, with slight changes (as noted in *italic* letters), are the five doctrines of grace that are historic Baptist beliefs and are the beliefs of Primitive Baptists today. Consider the following:

1) Total Depravity

“Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not---indeed he cannot---choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit’s assistance to bring a sinner to Christ---it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation, but is itself a part of God’s gift of salvation---it is God’s gift to the sinner, not the sinner’s gift to God.”

- *[Note: There is no change from the Synod of Dort.]*

2) Unconditional Election

“God’s choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God’s choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. *(One sentence at this point is omitted.)* Thus God’s choice of the sinner, not the sinner’s choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.”

- [Note: The sentence omitted is “Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ.” This belief created the paradox under consideration. Also this doctrine is incorrect because it forgets that

some of God's elect die as infants, have mental afflictions, never hear the gospel, and even reject the gospel in unbelief, as 2 Timothy 2:13 states, "*If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.*"

3) Limited Atonement

"Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation." (*The last one and a half sentences are omitted.*)

- [Note: The one and a half sentences that are omitted are as follows: "including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, thereby guaranteeing their salvation." This is another belief that assured a paradox between God's sovereignty and the responsibility of man. Also, this statement fails to recognize that man's faith received at regeneration (as fruit of the Spirit—Galatians 5:22-23) can be rejected by the sinner to the point of unbelief as Romans 3:3-4 "*For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar,*" Even so, the sinner is still saved eternally.]

4) Irresistible Grace

"*Rather than*¹ the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that *immediately*²

brings them to salvation. *This inward call made between conception and death does not involve the gospel in any way*³. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in *regeneration*⁴. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. *(one sentence omitted)* God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is *intended*⁵."

- [Note: Words change #1 "In addition to" changed to "Rather than." Word change #2 is "inevitably" to "immediately." One sentence added as noted #3 to make clearer. Word change #4 is "conversion" to "regeneration" (See Chapter XII, page 139, for the difference in these two words). The following sentence was omitted: "The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ." Again, these beliefs that are omitted involve man's obedience causing the paradox (trying to justify it by saying God "graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate"). Further, this sentence fails to realize that many of God's people are rebellious, being guilty of the sin of unbelief, and while they are eternally saved, they will suffer in this life for their rebellion as stated in Hebrews 3:1-19 and 10:26-31. Word #5 change is "extended" to "intended."]

5) *Preservation*¹ of the Saints

"All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given *spiritual life*² by the Spirit are eternally saved. They

are kept in *spiritual life*³ by the power of Almighty God and thus are *preserved*⁴ to the end.”

- [Note: Word change #1 is “perseverance” to “preservation.” Word #2 is “faith” to “spiritual life.” Word #3 is “faith” to “spiritual life.” Word #4 is “persevere” to “are preserved.” The word “persevere” implies the effort of the sinner will never fail (causing the paradox). We know better than that as given in Romans 3:3 and 2 Timothy 2:13 as quoted above. “Preserved” is a Bible term as in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, “*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” It is only the effort of God that will never fail.]

Conclusion

Of the Five Doctrines of Grace given above, the first on the total depravity of natural man (no changes from Synod of Dort) is most important. See Chapter X beginning on page 118 for more on total depravity. This principle must be fully and completely understood if the reader is to appreciate the other four doctrines of grace. It explains how fallen man, spiritually dead, cannot be involved in any way with eternal salvation. The dead can do nothing for themselves. If this principle is followed very closely, then no paradox in scripture will occur. Also, it should be equally obvious why one’s religious practice has no effect at all regarding regeneration. The Pharisees were very religious, but notice what Christ said to them in John 8:43-47. All verses that command God’s children to obey His commandments have to do with conditional time “salvation.” The benefits and penalties will be experienced in this life only and will have no affect at all on eternal salvation. There is no paradox!

Chapter IV Salvation

The reader most likely has been introduced to a concept never before considered. The concept that regeneration and conversion are two completely separate events will require a fairly extensive study. See Chapter XII entitled Regeneration versus Conversion beginning on page 139 for more on this subject.

One must heed the advice given in the following Bible verse:

- Acts 17:11 *“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”*

Even though this doctrine resolves the paradox of grace and free will, and fits scripture in a very logical fashion that gives all the honor and glory to God, still it may be a new concept for one to digest. For this reason salvation itself will first be briefly studied. For a broader view of salvation, see Chapter VI entitled Multiple Salvations beginning on page 66.

Salvation is a very interesting subject. The word “salvation,” when applied to the salvation of the elect children of God, is an inclusive, all-embracing word that gathers into itself all the redemptive acts and processes, such as foreknowledge, election, predestination, adoption, justification, redemption, grace, propitiation, imputation, conversion, sanctification, and glorification. This chapter will attempt to break down the various stages involved in the salvation of God’s people.

Salvation has five stages--four phases and one aspect

There are five stages involved in the salvation of God's people--four unfailing phases that are by God alone, which always take place for the elect of God, and one aspect of salvation, which may or may not occur. Consider the following:

- (1) Phase one is the election phase. *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,”* (I Peter 1:2) *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.”* (Ephesians 1:4-5)
- (2) Phase two is the justification phase. This was accomplished by Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago--*“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”* (Romans 4:25) *“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”* (Romans 5:9) *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”* (Ephesians 1:7)
- (3) Phase three is the regeneration phase. *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* (Titus 3:5) *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3:8)

- (4) Phase four is the final glorification phase for entire conformity to Christ. *“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”* (1Corinthians 15:52)
- (5) The conversion aspect of salvation for the child of God to become a disciple of Christ, called a Christian in Acts 11:26, is sometimes referred to as conditional time “salvation.” It may, or it may not, take place for the child of God during their lifetime. Some of God’s regenerate children die as infants, some may have a mental affliction, and others live in a remote part of the world. Some may hear the gospel, but refuse to follow Christ as a disciple. Even so, nothing in this life can affect their salvation to heaven. However, conversion to discipleship will be of great benefit to God’s children during their lifetime. Many works are required for the child of God to become a converted disciple of Christ. They must repent (Acts 3:19), confess Christ as their saviour (Romans 10:9), and as a believer to submit to baptism (Mark 16:16).

To see the four phases of salvation (for heaven that cannot fail) as given above, consider the following:

- Romans 8:28-31 *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we*

then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

The conversion aspect is omitted in Romans 8:28-39 because only a few of God's people are ever converted to become disciples of Christ, so as to receive a salvation in time. Time "salvation" (conversion) offers a salvation from this wicked untoward generation, as declared by Peter in Acts 2:40. If a born again person is ever converted (remembering that some of God's born again children die unconverted), this aspect (conversion) of salvation can then be lost by the person through "backsliding." Again, to see more on Conversion, refer to Chapter XII entitled Regeneration versus Conversion, beginning on page 139.

The tenses of salvation

The above five stages of salvation occurs in three tenses of time...Past...Present (between conception and death)...and Future, as follows:

- Past tense. The Elect of God chosen before the foundation of the world (phase 1) are justified and redeemed by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (phase 2). As a result, the elect of God have been saved from the eternal penalty of sin and are safe regarding their home in heaven at the end of time.
- Present tense (between conception and death). The elect of God are regenerated, or born again (phase 3), at some time between conception and death. The born again person may or may not be saved during their physical life from the habit of sin through the aspect of salvation called conversion (5), so as to become a disciple of Christ (called a Christian in Acts 11:26).

- Future tense. The glorified child of God is saved from the presence of sin (in their body known as their carnal flesh nature) in the sense of entire conformity to Christ (phase 4).

Conclusion

There is only one salvation for God's people; however, it incorporates five stages in three tenses of time: past, present (from conception to death), and future. There is a verse that gives the three tenses of time:

- 2 Corinthians 1:10 *"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver [us];"* (So great a death must mean death in Adam, doth deliver must refer to timely events, and yet deliver us must refer to heaven in the future.)

The salvations mentioned in 2 Corinthians 1:10 have been expressed as a past deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin (death in Adam), a present deliverance from the power of sin through conversion into the Lord's church, and a future deliverance from the presence of sin, or essence of sin in the human body by receiving a glorified body.

May we all praise God, and thank Him for His amazing grace and mercy in the salvation of His people....all five stages of salvation, with four unfailing phases that assure heaven for the Elect of God, and one aspect for a possible blessing during this lifetime.

As has been mentioned, the one aspect of salvation (stage five) available to the obedient child of God is a temporal blessing that incorporates gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord's church, and this aspect of

salvation can be lost through backsliding in rebellion against God. Primitive Baptists would call this aspect (stage five) of one's deliverance conditional time "salvation." Conditional time "salvation" resolves the paradox between God's sovereign grace in eternal salvation (assures heaven for the elect) and man's will made free by regeneration as exercised in obeying (or not obeying) the gospel that affects the person's quality of life and length of life.

Elder Harold Hunt wrote an excellent little book titled *I Have Set Before You Life and Death*. He opens with a speech God gave Moses to deliver to the children of Israel before they possessed the Promised Land. The Promised Land was a picture (or type) of the Lord's church in our day. After the gospel has been preached to God's people, the New Testament preacher should then read to them (possible future church members) this same speech, because it applies as much today as it did in the day of Moses. Please see the conditional time "salvation" God is offering His people (Israel or us) available by obedience:

- Deuteronomy 30:15-19 *"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call*

heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.”

This is a warning by God to His people commanding them to obey His Laws and thereby choose life, which means the abundant life mentioned by Jesus in John 10:10 *“I am come that they have life, and that they might have it more abundantly,”* or the life (free of destruction) as noted in Matthew 7:13-14:

- *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

If we defile our bodies by committing sinful acts, God will destroy us (physical death): 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”*

The failure to be obedient means suffering in this life and death (not eternal damnation) as we are also warned in Hebrews 10:26-31. Hebrews 10:31 says *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* This is advice we should heed.

Section II Three Essential Facts

Elder Sonny Pyles preached a sermon some time ago entitled "Three Essential Facts." The four chapters in this section are based on this sermon. The three essential facts as given under chapters V, VI and VII are 1) Cause and Effect (belief in Christ is the effect of eternal life and never the cause), 2) Multiple Salvations (there is more than one salvation taught in the Bible), and 3) Kingdom Bible Verses (kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven, and kingdom of His dear Son). The idea for the last chapter in this section, Chapter VIII, entitled How Primitive Baptist Beliefs Differ, is also based on the above sermon by Elder Sonny Pyles.

Elder Pyles stated something to the effect that if one of God's children could understand even one or two of these principles, then he was a long way down the road of understanding the gospel and what the Lord has done for him. These three things described as three essential facts alerts one to notice how words and phrases are used in the Bible. Also, some words are used to describe more than one thing, or more than one aspect of something. A child of God must always notice closely the grammar and context when studying the Bible, and be sure to let the Bible be the dictionary for defining terms. As 1 Corinthians 2:13 states, *"Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."*

Chapter V

Cause and Effect

This is the first of the three essential facts we must understand, if we are to understand what Jesus has done for us. This principle applies if we falsely attempt to prove that our belief in Christ is the cause of eternal life. The Bible clearly teaches that our belief that Jesus is the Son of God is evidence that we are already a child of God.

Belief in Christ cannot be both the cause as well as the effect of eternal life. It must be either one or the other. For real world examples of cause and effect, consider a person that has high fever. A medical doctor would say the fever is an effect or evidence of some sickness. The doctor would then look for the cause of this problem. The doctor would never consider the fever to be the cause of the sickness. It is impossible for something to be both the cause as well as the effect of an occurrence.

Let's consider another real world example. Imagine that an electric lamp does not work. The fact that the lamp does not work is the symptom or effect that points you back to the cause of the problem. The cause may be a burned out light bulb, faulty wiring, a popped circuit breaker, etc. You could not say that the lack of light is the cause of the problem. No light when the lamp is turned on is the effect.

We should take the time now to prove with Bible verses that our belief is always the effect or evidence of eternal life. Our belief cannot possibly be both the cause (and a condition that must be met) as well as the effect or evidence. Consider the following:

- 1 John 5:1 *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”*
Our belief is evidence that eternal life already exists.
- John 5:24 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*
- John 6:47 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”*
- Acts 13:48 *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”*

Our faith is listed as one of the nine *“fruit of the Spirit”* given in the following verse:

- Galatians 5:22-23 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*

The fruit of an apple tree is an apple. First there must be the apple tree, and then later the tree produces the apple as fruit. In the same way a person must first be born of the Spirit, then this person will possess the fruit of the Spirit...the seventh fruit listed being faith. A person could not exercise his faith (which he does not have) by believing that Jesus is the Christ until after he has been born of the Spirit of God and received faith as the fruit of the Spirit.

If someone were to say that all people have a little faith, one must then point out that the Bible clearly states all

people do not have faith. The Bible verse which says exactly that is as follows:

- 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2 *“Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.”*

For this reason the gospel is delivered by a child of God who has faith to other of God’s children who also have faith. The gospel cannot be delivered from those who have faith to those who are without faith. Notice what is stated by Romans 1:17 *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith:”* In others words the gospel is the power of God only to regenerate children of God who have faith. 1 Corinthians 1:18 also says exactly that, as follows: *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”*

Finally, there is a problem with the theory that believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is something a person must do to obtain eternal life. I would question why Jesus made the following statements in the gospel of John:

- John 10:25-28 *“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

- John 8:46-47 *“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”*

Jesus clearly states to His audience that they cannot hear or believe because they are not God's children. It is not a matter of their decision for Christ. The problem is they have no spiritual life.

These people addressed by Jesus do not have the ability to hear spiritual matters. This principle is also proven by the following verse:

- 1 Corinthians 2:14 *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* (a natural man is unregenerate)

Conclusion

It should be very clear from the above that our belief that Jesus is the Christ is evidence we are already a child of God. It is the “effect” of being already born again. It cannot be something we must try to do so as to obtain eternal life. It is impossible for something to be both the cause of an occurrence as well as being the effect and evidence. Further we also proved the unregenerate cannot hear, understand or believe spiritual things, so how could they believe Jesus is the Christ? Life must come first, and then action is possible. Regeneration by God gives spiritual life, and then obedience to gospel commands offers the possibility of a blessing to the child of God to be enjoyed during his lifetime.

Chapter VI Multiple Salvations

The purpose of this chapter is to consider how the Bible uses “save,” “saved” or “salvation” to mean several different things. This is the second essential fact taught by Elder Sonny Pyles in his sermon entitled *Three Essential Facts*.

Too often, the Bible believer assumes that the word “save” means only saved eternally, which is not the case. When one becomes aware of the different ways the Bible uses this word, he is more likely to consider the context and grammar, as well as comparisons with other verses, and not jump to hasty conclusions. We are told to “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” (2 Timothy 2:15)

One of the most important principles of Bible study is to “rightly divide” the scripture. The Bible contains examples in which the meaning of the word “save” is obvious. For two simple examples, notice the meaning of “save” in the following:

- 2 Corinthians 11:24 “*Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.*” Paul obviously means he received forty stripes except (or less) one, for a total of thirty-nine stripes.
- Matthew 19:11 “*But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.*” Obviously “save” in this verse means “except.”

The above verses could not be confused with saved eternally; however, they show that one should at least pause briefly to consider other possible definitions when the meaning is not so obvious.

Eternal Salvation

To begin our study, let's first look at verses that teach eternal salvation. Very little, if any, disagreement should exist as to their meaning. Notice that these verses clearly state that the sinner has nothing to do with his eternal salvation. Eternal salvation is totally a work performed by God, alone and unaided. This fact is most important to remember. Consider the following:

- 2 Timothy 1:9 *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."*
- Titus 3:5 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"*
- Ephesians 2:8-9 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."*
- Matthew 1:21 *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* This verse does not say Jesus will try to save His people if they will only cooperate. It just says He shall save His people from their sins.

Notice the prayer Jesus prays to the Father just before He is crucified. John 17:1-2 *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”* Jesus has power over all flesh, and this verse says He gives eternal life to as many as the Father gave Him to save. As many as means not one more or not one less. Apparently, Jesus did not just make a way of salvation if the sinner would accept Him as their personal saviour, but that He actually saved eternally every one the Father gave Him to save, without the loss of even one. John 6:37-39 quoted below is also very strong on this point. Jesus saved everyone chosen by the Father as declared in Ephesians 1:4: *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”*

As noted above, Jesus Christ saves all those chosen before the foundation of the world by the Father, and He saves them eternally without the loss of one. This fact is also clearly stated in John 6:37-39, as follows:

- John 6:37-39 *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”*

Before we begin to look at other “save” Bible verses, remember how clearly the language used above teaches that eternal salvation is totally the work of God, and that

our personal failures in this life do not hinder God from accomplishing His purpose.

Salvation from physical danger

The following Bible verses deal with physical dangers which could result in physical suffering and physical death. No one would misunderstand these verses and think eternal salvation is the subject. Notice how these Bible verses with save or saved mean a timely deliverance from a timely danger:

- Exodus 14:28-30 *“And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them. But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.”*
The Lord saved the children of Israel that day from physical death at the hands of the Egyptians. No one would make the mistake of thinking this verse had anything to do with eternal salvation. “Saved” in this verse means a timely deliverance from a timely danger.
- Acts 27:31 *“Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.”* Paul obviously means saved from physical death due to drowning. Once again, “saved” in this verse means a timely deliverance from a timely danger.
- Matthew 14:29-30 *“And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the*

water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.” Peter was asking Jesus to save him from drowning; he was not asking Jesus to save him eternally. Peter was asking for a timely deliverance from a timely danger.

- 1 Timothy 2:15 *“Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”* Everyone would agree that saved in this verse does not mean saved eternally. The verse means a timely deliverance from a timely danger.

After considering the above Bible verses, one should have no problem understanding the correct meaning of the word “save” or “saved.”

Time Salvation

The term “time salvation” or “temporal salvation” is not found in scripture. “Time salvation” describes salvation “in time,” or salvation in this present world. This salvation is also a timely deliverance from a timely danger. This timely deliverance is a salvation from physical suffering and possible physical death from the chastening rod of God against His disobedient children, as opposed to eternal suffering in hell (called the second death). For a good scripture reference, consider the following:

- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”* (Also Hebrews 10:26-31)

Now, if the reader will refer to Chapter X, entitled Total depravity beginning on page 118, we will see that the spiritually dead sinner can neither hear nor understand things of God, and their carnal mind is enmity against God. In this condition, the unregenerate must have a saviour that does everything, because the dead can do nothing for themselves. Only God can quicken the dead, as given in Ephesians 2:1 *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:”*

Now let's get a little more complicated. Not everyone agrees on the meaning of the following Bible verses. Even so, unless the Bible has contradictions (and we know that it does not) then these verses cannot refer to eternal salvation, but must be a timely deliverance from a timely danger for God's born again children. In other words, they must have reference to time or temporal “salvation,” available to an obedient disciple of Christ.

- 1 Timothy 4:16 *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”* Surely Paul believes Timothy is already saved eternally. Surely he does not think Timothy could save himself and those that hear him eternally by taking *“heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine, etc.”* or he would be preaching a works salvation about which Timothy and those that hear him could boast. As Ephesians 2:8-9 *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”* Also Titus 3:5 says the same, as follows: *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* In returning to, 1 Timothy 4:16, obviously Paul

meant that if Timothy takes heed to the doctrine and continued in it, he could save himself and those that hear him from the untoward generation of that day. Peter preaches this same salvation in Acts 2:38-40, which deals with God's born again children following Christ as a disciple. Not all of God's people will agree to be a disciple. Those who will not follow Christ as His disciple will never lose eternal salvation, but their disobedience will result in their suffering chastisement in this life, as in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Hebrews 10:26-31 and 12:5-11. Since chastisement could result in not only physical suffering, but also physical death, one could say the salvation called for by 1 Timothy 4:16 is a "timely deliverance from a timely danger" or "time salvation."

- 1 Peter 3:20-21 *"Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:"* In what sense did water save Noah and his family? Also, this verse says that baptism now saves us in the same way that the water (floodwaters) saved Noah and his family. We remember how wicked man was in the days of Noah, as Genesis 6:5 *"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* Also much violence existed, as Genesis 6:13 *"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."* Returning to 1 Peter 3:20-21, the only

logical meaning for how water (the floodwaters) saved Noah and his family, is that it saved them from the “wickedness “ and “violence” of that time. It was a “time salvation.” Noah and his family were saved by floodwaters from the untoward (unruly) generation of that day. This salvation is compared to how we are now saved by baptism. To prove this fact more clearly, see Acts 2:38, 40: *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized....”* Now in verse 40 we have *“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”* Obedience to the gospel and baptism of a believer saves one, but the salvation is not eternal. Rather, it is a salvation from the wicked untoward generation in which we live. The same principle applicable in the days of Peter (Acts 2:40) or in the days of Noah (1 Peter 3:20-21) is applicable today. The one who is to be saved through discipleship needs “good works”.

- Mark 16:15-16 *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* We just learned above that baptism saves one *“from this untoward generation”* (Acts 2:40), which is a salvation in this life for a born again child of God. For further proof on this verse, notice that “every creature” refers to a born again person. When referring to a person, creature is defined by the Bible as in 2 Corinthians 5:17, which states the following: *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* Also, we know a believer is someone that is already saved eternally, as 1 John 5:1 *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.”* We also learn that if this creature

(born again person) rejects the gospel message in unbelief and refuses to be baptized, then he will be damned (suffer chastisement, not eternal damnation) as Luke 12:47 *“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.”* From this verse we should see that Mark 16:15-16 offers a timely deliverance from a timely danger, or time “salvation.”

- Philippians 2:12 *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”* This verse refers to a “works salvation,” so it cannot mean eternal salvation based on the Bible verses quoted earlier. “Fear and trembling” reminds one that God chastens His rebellious and disobedient children. Remember the Corinthian brethren who were guilty of taking the communion service unworthily, as 1 Corinthians 11:28, 30 *“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”* The 30th verse says *“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.”* Disobedience cost many their health and some their life. God’s children who possess faith need to demonstrate “good works.” As James 2:20 says *“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”* Good works can never produce eternal salvation, but for an obedient child of God, discipleship yields comfort and happiness. This salvation offers a timely deliverance from a timely danger, in other words, time “salvation.”

- Romans 10:13 *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* Notice the action needed by the person in order that he receive salvation. As above, this verse refers to a “works salvation,” so it must mean a salvation from *“this untoward generation”* as preached by Peter in Acts 2:38-40. This salvation is gained by the obedient child of God when he repents of his sins (Acts 3:19), confesses Christ (Romans 10:9), and as a believer, submits to baptism. Notice that the 10th Chapter of Romans is addressed to God’s born again children. It begins as follows: Romans 10:1 *“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”* Brethren is defined by Hebrews 3:1 *“Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling...”* Romans 10:2 says, *“...they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”* The unregenerate do not have a zeal of God because their *“carnal mind is enmity against God.”* (Romans 8:7) Romans 10:1 says *“that they might be saved.”* This salvation is conditionally based on works that will later be explained, such as to confess Christ as saviour in the 9th verse. To confess Christ is not the same as to accept Christ. No verse in the Bible says we should accept Christ. Not one. Ephesians 1:6 says *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”* God made us accepted, not the opposite, where we accept Christ. The unregenerate hate God, their *“carnal mind is enmity against God”* (Romans 8:7).

From the Bible verses quoted above, one might say they speak of a salvation that is in addition to eternal glory. Another verse states this fact exactly, as follows:

- 2 Timothy 2:10 *“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”* The elect are God’s children, chosen by the Father as stated in Ephesians 1:4. Paul endures all things with the hope they may also obtain something in addition to eternal glory, and that something is *“the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus,”* a salvation from this *“untoward generation”* (Acts 2:40).

Another verse that says the gospel saves one of God’s children who are already saved eternally, is as follows:

- 1 Corinthians 1:21 *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* We remember that someone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, is already saved eternally. This fact is stated in 1 John 5:1 as follows: *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:”* It is also clearly stated in John 6:47 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”* This salvation must be a salvation from this untoward generation, as Acts 2:40. Therefore, preaching the gospel only benefits those who are already saved eternally. Actually, 1 Corinthians 1:18 states this fact, as follows: *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish (unregenerate) foolishness; but unto us which are saved (eternally) it is the power of God.”*

Another verse that is related to this subject is not always understood properly, in my opinion. Consider the following:

- Matthew 7:13-14 *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to*

destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” If this verse refers to eternal salvation and eternal destruction, then it would support a works salvation. It must have reference to “a timely deliverance from a timely danger.” This advice about how we should conduct ourselves during our lifetime must offer us time “salvation.” The advice offers us a timely deliverance from timely dangers.

Conclusion

Hopefully, this chapter has created enough interest in the words “save,” “saved” and “salvation,” so that the reader will always examine more closely how the Bible uses these words before jumping to a hasty conclusion as to their actual meaning.

While there are many deep subjects in the Bible that are difficult to understand, salvation should be straightforward and simple for God’s children. The sovereignty of God verses in Romans 9 do not conflict with the responsibility of man verses given in Romans 10. His people can rejoice that eternal salvation is totally in God’s hands, and the gospel is sent to His elect children offering a salvation from this “*untoward generation*” (Acts 2:40), free of the chastening rod of God (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, Hebrews 10:26-31 and 12:5-11), in fellowship with Christ (Revelation 3:20-22), in His church. This is called conditional time “salvation.” It is gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord’s church for blessings in this lifetime.

Chapter VII **"Kingdom" Bible Verses**

This chapter will explore the meaning of verses that contain the expression "kingdom of God," "kingdom of heaven," or "kingdom of His dear Son." This is the third essential fact taught in the sermon by Elder Sonny Pyles entitled *Three Essential Facts*.

As Elder Pyles stated, if one assumes that in every case these terms have reference to the eternal heaven, then this assumption will lead to endless confusion. In the same way, if one assumes that in every case they have reference to the Lord's church, then this assumption is also wrong. He stated that the Bible uses these expressions in five different senses. In the above mentioned sermon, Elder Pyles said he would only deal with three of the five senses. In the same way, this chapter will also attempt to deal with only three of the five senses.

To begin the study, and better appreciate the problem, let's compare a number of different Bible verses that appear at first to contradict each other. First, let's notice the following two Bible verses:

- Luke 17:20 *"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."*
- John 3:3 *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

Further explanation is needed regarding the kingdom of God that comes without observation, and the kingdom of God that can only be seen if one is born again.

Now let's compare two other verses, as follows:

- Colossians 1:13 *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."*
- Luke 16:16 *"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."*

Obviously the kingdom one is translated into is somewhat different than the kingdom into which you must press. We remember the Bible verse concerning Enoch, as follows:

- Hebrews 11:5 *"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."*

Enoch did not have to perform any action when God translated him into heaven. In the same way, the person being translated into the kingdom of His dear Son is passive, and does no work such as *"pressing"* into this kingdom. However, Luke 16:16 refers to the kingdom of God being preached, and *"every man presseth into it."* He presses against the world, the flesh and the devil. Obviously, these two verses (Colossians 1:13 and Luke 16:16) are not referring to exactly the same thing.

Finally, consider two more aspects of the kingdom that seem to be at odds with each other:

- Matthew 11:12 *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”*
- John 18:36 *“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”*

Notice that in Matthew 11:12 quoted above, the kingdom of heaven can suffer violence...or can be abused by the world. History is filled with examples of God’s church and its members being persecuted. However, when Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:33 *“Art thou the King of the Jews?”* Jesus stated in John 18:36 (quoted above) that if His kingdom were of this world, then His servants would fight. Obviously the kingdom that can suffer violence in this world is not the same aspect of the kingdom that Jesus told Pilate was *“not of this world.”*

As Elder Sonny Pyles explains further, if you try to compare these kingdom verses side by side, they will never make sense. The above examples should make this point clear. He suggested the following analogy to gain a better understanding. Consider brother Sonny is walking down a street in Paris, France. If someone approaching him would ask if he was from North America, he could answer yes. If another person would ask if he was from the United States, he could also answer yes. Finally, if a third person would ask if he was from Texas, he could again answer yes. In each geographic location, the smaller is contained in the larger, so he is truthful in answering yes to each question. This principle can also apply to the various kingdom verses.

Kingdom of God = Kingdom of heaven

The terms "kingdom of God" and "kingdom of heaven" are two names for the same thing. The mother country of this kingdom is heaven, and God is the King. The expressions are used interchangeably in the gospels. To prove this fact, consider the following parallel verses in Matthew and Mark:

- Matthew 4:12, 17 *"Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;..... From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*
- Mark 1:14 *"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."*

Further, both terms are used together in two succeeding verses:

- Matthew 19:23-24 *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."*

Eternal Kingdom

We will first deal with the kingdom that is based in heaven. It is the mother country, so to speak. (The mother country would be North America in the analogy given by Elder Sonny Pyles.)

Before the crucifixion of Jesus, Pilate asked Jesus if He was King of the Jews. Jesus answered as follows:

- John 18:36 *“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”*

Obviously, Jesus is referring to the eternal kingdom that is in heaven. Another example of verses that refer to the kingdom of God as being the eternal kingdom is as follows:

- I Corinthians 15:50 *“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*

As stated above, this kingdom is based in heaven, and God is the king. However, many members of this kingdom are in this present world. They are strangers and pilgrims from a far country, as in the following verse:

- Hebrews 11:13 *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”*

Regenerate elect of God

Next, we will deal with a very large group of people in this present world who are the elect of God, as described below: (In the analogy, this is the United States.)

- Ephesians 1:4 *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:"*

The above elect individuals will be given spiritual life by regeneration as described below:

- Titus 3:5 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"*

These individuals have been given spiritual life:

- Ephesians 2:1 *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:"*

All of the above actions have been done by God alone without any effort being performed by the individuals involved, since the dead can do nothing for themselves. You might say these individuals have been translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, as follows:

- Colossians 1:13 *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*

This particular aspect of the kingdom would come without observation, as Jesus stated. This kingdom is within the regenerate child of God.

- Luke 17:20-21 *“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”*

I would explain the above by saying the Pharisees Jesus is speaking to in Luke 17:20 must have been unregenerate. In this state these Pharisees cannot hear spiritual things:

- John 8:47 *“He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”*

The unregenerate cannot understand spiritual things:

- I Corinthians 2:14 *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

The unregenerate cannot believe:

- John 10:26-28 *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

In this condition, they cannot see, or observe, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of His dear son. To the unregenerate human world, the Lord’s church and preaching of the cross is only foolishness:

- I Corinthians 1:18 *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”*

Further, Jesus says this kingdom of God is within you; therefore, it cannot be seen by human eyes. Consider the following verse that states the Spirit of God dwells within the regenerate child of God whose body is called a temple:

- Corinthians I 3:16-17 *"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."*

The unregenerate human world could never see the kingdom of God described above concerning regenerate children of God. The kingdom of God is within them as is also stated above in Luke 17:21, *"Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."*

The Lord's church

Finally, we will deal with the smallest group of people, the Lord's church. The church consists of God's born again children who, through their obedience to gospel commands, are disciples of Christ. (In the analogy, being a disciple of Christ is likened to being a citizen of Texas.)

The Lord's church is referred to as the kingdom in many Bible verses. The Lord's church is the smallest kingdom group, and is referred to as only a *"little flock,"* as the following:

- Luke 12:32 *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."*

God's born again children must press into this kingdom actively, as follows:

- Luke 16:16 *“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”*

John the Baptist proclaimed this kingdom, as follows:

- Matthew 3:1-2 *“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Jesus preached this same message:

- Matthew 4:17 *“From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

To demonstrate that the church and the kingdom of heaven as given above are one and the same, notice that Jesus refers to both as if they are the same. Consider these verses:

- Matthew 16:18-19 *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*

The Lord’s church is the kingdom of heaven that is persecuted, or suffers violence, as follows:

- Matthew 11:12 *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”*

In order for a person to see the kingdom of God, or that aspect which is the Lord's church, then it is necessary that this person already be born again. Jesus confirms this fact to Nicodemus as follows:

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

In this state of possessing spiritual life, the child of God now is able to see the much smaller aspect of the kingdom of God which is the Lord's church, if they are ever blessed to hear the gospel preached. After hearing the gospel, they may or may not choose to press into the Kingdom of God:

- Luke 16:16 *"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it."*

For a child of God to "press into the kingdom of God," or church, they must repent of their sins:

- Acts 3:19 *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;"*

They must confess Christ (notice the verse does not say "accept" Christ) as their saviour:

- Romans 10:9 *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."*

As a believer, the child of God must submit to baptism:

- Mark 16:16 *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

If the child of God does not “press into the kingdom,” in the church, he will miss receiving the salvation “*from this untoward generation*” as preached by Peter in Acts:

- Acts 2:38-40 *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*

If these children of God do not “press into the kingdom,” as outlined above, they are still regenerate children of God. Their rebellion will be punished by God in this life as stated in Mark 16:16 above... *“but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* Other excellent verses on damnation in this life (chastisement) are given in Hebrews as follows:

- Hebrews 10:26-31 *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto*

me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

- *Hebrews 12:5-11 "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."*

As stated above, many born again people who are regenerate, for one reason or another, have not "pressed into the kingdom" by obeying the gospel message. Many reasons exist as to why only a few of God's people are in the Lord's church. They may have died in infancy or at a young age. They may have a mental handicap. They may not have been blessed to ever hear the gospel message preached. Or finally, they may have heard the gospel preached, but have not wanted to give up some of the "pleasures" of this world. As a result, many born again people are not in the Lord's church. They are sons of God,

but they are not disciples of Christ. They are regenerate, but they are not fully converted.

Those individuals who are blessed to be in the Lord's church, (kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God, as it is called), come to realize that they are out of place in the world. They love the gospel and they love the Lord's people. They feel as if they are strangers in a far country. Notice again this Bible verse quoted earlier:

- Hebrews 11:13 *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."*

The above kingdom described by the various verses given above is sometimes referred to as the "visible " church.

Kingdom Prophecy

Prophecy in the Old Testament concerning the Kingdom of God can be found in 2 Samuel as follows:

- 2 Samuel 7:12 *"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:"*

The house noted above is the heart of each "born again" person. As Luke 17:21 says, *"for behold, the kingdom of God in within you,"* as well as, I Corinthians 3:16 *"Know ye*

not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

This kingdom was declared and established at the time of the apostles. To prove this fact, consider the sermon preached by Peter "*when the day of Pentecost was fully come,*" in the second chapter of Acts:

- Acts 2:29-35 *"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool."*

The kingdom was declared established at the time of the resurrection of Christ (see above), when David was still in the grave. Contrary to the premillennial belief, Christ will not be brought back at the "second coming" to set up the kingdom. At the second coming of Christ, both the just and the unjust will be raised, and those which are alive will be caught up together, and Christ will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father. Consider:

- I Corinthians 15:24 *“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.”*

At this time Jesus has been reigning on the throne of David for about 2,000 years. The one thousand year reign spoken of in Revelation 20:2-5 is a large precise number and is used in the same sense as “thousand” spoken of in Psalms 50:10, Psalms 105:8 and Deuteronomy 7:9.

Let’s look at a second analogy with the hope of better understanding what has been presented above. Consider that the church of Jesus Christ is an embassy in a foreign land (the world). The embassy property in the foreign land is owned by the mother country (heaven). The pastor would compare somewhat with the ambassador of this embassy. The one who rules the embassy is the president of the mother country...in this case it is God the Son (our Lord Jesus Christ) through the Holy Spirit. When a citizen of the mother country is traveling in this foreign land (the world) and visits the mother country embassy (the church), he feels that he is back home. Even so, many of these citizens of the mother country traveling in this foreign land may never enter the embassy, yet they are all still citizens of the mother country. Not all of God’s regenerate children will be converted disciples of Christ, in His church.

As you consider the above comparison of the church being an embassy in a foreign land, you then realize that the Lord’s church actually offers the child of God a little taste of heaven (the mother country) while still on earth. The church member enjoys fellowship with Jesus Christ Himself, as Jesus declared to the Laodicean church (this verse is addressed to church members who are guilty of

sins that could cast them out of the church...Revelation 3:15-19):

- Revelation 3:20-22 *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."*

The above verse was addressed to the Laodicean church, not to dead alien unregenerate sinners, as some people think. It was addressed to church members. Remember, only God's born again children can hear God's words:

- John 8:47 *"He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."*

To repeat, God's church offers the child of God a small taste of heaven on earth. In church, they have their *"pure mind"* (2 Peter 3:1) stirred up, which is a mind that cannot sin (1John 3:9). This *"pure mind"* is the earnest of our inheritance (heaven is our inheritance) that is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Children of God *"labor and are heavy laden"* (Matthew 11:28) until through obedience he presses into the kingdom (Luke 16:16) to become disciples of Christ in His church and finds rest for his soul. This *"rest"* one receives (Matthew 11:28) in the church offers healing; the church is a hospital for sinners. The church is the place where God's people can receive spiritual food through the preached word, and as a result they can both grow and mature spiritually. Notice this verse:

- I Peter 2:2 *“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”*

God has many children today that are still spiritual infants that are suffering and do not know why. They need to heed this warning given the children of Israel *“as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”* (Hebrews 3:7). Discipleship in the church is the only way God’s people will ever be truly happy in this life on earth. No amount of material success and worldly recognition can fill this need. Hopefully God’s children today will understand this, and turn back to the Bible. A Primitive Baptist would call this conditional time “salvation,” because this deliverance is provided by God to be enjoyed during this lifetime.

Conclusion

The kingdom of God, kingdom of heaven or kingdom of His dear Son is wherever God is ruling. Whether it is in the eternal heaven itself, in the heart of God’s born again children, or finally, in His church that is the much smaller group of God’s born again people who have been obedient unto the gospel message and have become disciples of Christ in His church...the kingdom is wherever God is ruling.

Chapter VIII

How Primitive Baptist Beliefs Differ

This chapter will attempt to show how the beliefs of Primitive Baptists differ from the beliefs of other religious orders. The fact that different religious denominations can base their beliefs on the same New Testament Bible is really surprising. Since they do, understanding Bible doctrine that defines the basis for these differences is extremely important.

As with the three previous chapters, the idea for this subject was also obtained from the excellent sermon titled *Three Essential Facts* by Elder Sonny Pyles of Graham, Texas. As Elder Pyles stated during this sermon he was on a radio talk show on one occasion, and was asked to give a brief statement as to the essential difference between the beliefs of Primitive Baptists and the beliefs of other religious orders. His answer was a classic statement in my opinion. To paraphrase, he said that those things that other religious orders teach as the cause for spiritual life (being born again), Primitive Baptist teach are the evidences that show the individual is already born again.

Most religious orders take the position that to become one of God's born again children, one must first hear the gospel preached, believe the message preached, and then do other good works, depending on the particular religious order. This position may sound good at first, but in light of many straight forward Bible verses, it is just not supported by scripture.

Condition of a child of God

Those things that other religious orders believe one must do to become a child of God are the things that only a born again child of God has the ability and desire to do. God's children who are not yet disciples of Christ suffer from the guilt of their sins and are described as follows:

- Matthew 11:28 *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

God's children feel the weight of their sinfulness, and are torn in their desires (spiritual versus carnal) as expressed by the Apostle Paul in the following verses:

- Romans 7:14-25 *“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I*

myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”

The child of God is chastened by God for wrongdoing and for his benefit. Notice the following scripture:

- Hebrews 12:5-11 *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”*

Condition of the unregenerate

The eighth chapter of Romans, verse seven, portrays the condition of the unregenerate man. This person hates God and is not subject to the laws of God, as follows:

- Romans 8:7 *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”*

The unregenerate are perfectly described in Job 21 as follows:

- Job 21:7-16 *“Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.”*

The unregenerate described above also cannot hear the things of God as clearly given in the following verses:

- John 8:43-44 *“Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

Then a few verses later Jesus states:

- John 8:47 *“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”*

Notice that Jesus did not tell these people to hear and believe so they could become a child of God. He said the opposite. Jesus said they did not hear and believe because they were “*not of God.*” This distinction is very important.

We should consider other Bible verses to determine if this principle is supported in more than one place. Notice how the unregenerate cannot understand spiritual things:

- I Corinthians 2:14 *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

Notice that one’s ability, rather than his decision, is the focal point of the verse. Unless a person is born again, he cannot discern spiritual things.

Now let’s consider what Jesus told some unbelievers:

- John 10:26-30 *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.”*

Notice that Jesus did not tell them to believe in Him so they could become one of His sheep. Jesus said the opposite. He said they did not believe because they were not one of His sheep.

Now let's review what has been given above with simple straightforward Bible verses. Please remember these simple facts. If a person is not born again, his carnal mind hates God and he is not subject to the law of God (Romans 8:7). He does not suffer the chastening rod of God. He does not desire the knowledge of God and His ways, and sees no profit in serving or praying to Him (Job 21:7-16). The unregenerate person cannot hear God's words (John 8:43-47), he cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2:14), and he cannot believe (John 10:26). Obviously the gospel is of no benefit to this unregenerate person.

If the above is true, then a preacher would want to avoid the unregenerate that have no faith in God and hate God. Two verses confirm this expectation, as follows:

- 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2 *"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith."*
- Romans 15:30-31 *"Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;"*

Apparently, Paul does not want to deliver the gospel message to unbelievers who have no faith. The reason is that the gospel message is revealed from faith to faith, as given below:

- Romans 1:17 *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”*

If the gospel and gospel preaching are not for the unregenerate person, then they must have another purpose. In short, the gospel is for a born again child of God to be converted to the glory of God by becoming a disciple of Christ in His church. As stated in 1 Corinthians 1:18 *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* The gospel saves in time the eternally saved, as also stated in 1 Corinthians 1:21, *“...It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*

Good works for conversion

A number of acts would come under the heading of good works. Most other religious orders believe some or all of these works are necessary if one is to become a child of God. Primitive Baptists believe that if a person has the desire to perform these good works, then this desire is evidence the person is already born again and as a result they desire to be obedient to gospel commands in order to become a disciple of Christ. These good works are acts of obedience by the child of God in conversion from a sinful life to a Christian life. A number of good works are demanded in scripture, as follows:

- Acts 3:19 *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”*
- Romans 10:9 *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be*

saved.” This is not for the unregenerate, as Jesus said in John 10:26.

- Mark 16:16 *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*
- Romans 12:1 *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”*

Cause and effect

One important point that has already been mentioned in a number of previous chapters by quoting Elder Sonny Pyles is one’s belief that Jesus is the Christ cannot be both the cause as well as the effect of eternal life. In the real world, we always try to determine whether something is the cause of a problem (or occurrence), or whether it is just the effect, symptom, or evidence that points us back to the cause.

For a real world example of cause and effect, consider that an electric lamp is broken. The symptom, or effect, is that no light is produced when the lamp is turned on. The cause may be a burned out bulb, faulty wiring, a circuit breaker popped, etc. One could not say that the cause of the problem is the lack of light from the lamp.

Many people use John 3:16 as a verse to demonstrate how one is born again. A Primitive Baptist believes this verse teaches eternal security for God’s children. Refer to Chapter XVI beginning on page 195 for a more detailed study of this Bible verse. Regardless, let’s briefly review what this verse actually teaches us:

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

“Believeth” (as in “*whosoever believeth*”), based on the actual grammar, means whosoever is in the state of believing. In the Bible our “belief” is used primarily as an evidence, or effect that has resulted from being already born again. Consider the following:

- 1 John 5:1 *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”*
- John 5:24 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word (John 8:47), and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*
- John 6:47 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”*
- Acts 13:48 *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”*

Notice the fruit of the Spirit given in Galatians 5:22-23. A person who is born again is indwelled by the Spirit of God. Faith is a fruit that is produced by this indwelling as shown in the following verse:

- Galatians 5:22-23 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness,*

faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

Next, consider Bible verses that explain something about our spiritual birth... or being born again. Jesus told Nicodemus he must be born again (John 3:3 *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"*). This statement by Jesus does not imply any action for Nicodemus to perform, since Jesus then explains in John 3:8 when this occurrence may take place as follows: *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."* No man can control where or when the wind will blow (that is why Jesus used it as an example), or, in the same way, where or when the Holy Spirit will act in giving spiritual life. In John 6:63, Jesus states: *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

Jesus also states in John 5:25: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."* This voice is actually Jesus' voice, through the Holy Spirit, as when He called Lazarus from the grave in John 11:43. Man's repeating the words of Jesus, is not what leads one to become born again; rather, the actual voice of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit accomplishes this purpose. Man is not involved in this action in any way, since the unregenerate man is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) and hates God (Romans 8:7). Ephesians 2:1 states, *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."* The dead can do nothing for themselves.

Another verse that shows God's sovereignty in eternal salvation is John 6:44: *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* This principle is also stated by Jesus in John 6:65: *"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father."*

In addition, Jesus said in John 14:6, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* Those chosen by the Father (Ephesians 1:4) are given (not offered) eternal life by Jesus, as stated in John 17:2-3, *"As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."* Notice the limitation (to whom Jesus will give eternal life) strongly expressed by Jesus in praying for *"as many as,"* meaning not one more and not one less. Eternal life is only for those God the Father gave Jesus, as in John 6:37-39 *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."*

As stated above, belief in Christ is the evidence of spiritual life. Many people today say the opposite. They say belief in Christ is the cause of spiritual life. Something cannot be both the cause as well as the effect of an occurrence. The Bible primarily takes the position that belief is the effect. This faith is a *"fruit"* of the Holy Spirit that dwells within them.

Conclusion

As Elder Sonny Pyles pointed out to the radio talk show host, those things other religious orders teach as the cause for spiritual life (being born again), Primitive Baptists teach are the evidences that show the individual is already a born again child of God. This belief is the primary difference between Primitive Baptists and other religious orders.

The above concept is an important key to unlock the true meaning of the Bible. It provides proof that the Bible does support the goals established for this book. Namely, that God is sovereign in eternal salvation (regeneration) and the religious practice of man is in no way involved. The responsibility of man (through his religious practice) to be obedient to God's commandments (conversion unto discipleship) only affects blessings the child of God may or may not receive during this lifetime. Notice that not all of God's children are obedient to the gospel, or have heard the gospel as infants that die young, the mentally afflicted and those who live in remote parts of the world.

A person needs to be aware that regeneration is not the same thing as conversion. The subject of Regeneration versus Conversion is the title of Chapter XII, beginning on page 139, and these terms will be dealt with in more detail to provide further proof and support the goals established for this book.

Hopefully the reader can now appreciate how the beliefs of Primitive Baptists differ from those of other religious orders.

Section III

Time and Eternity Doctrines

This section contains nine chapters in which the reader can see that there are many Bible verses where God has made it very clear that eternal salvation is totally by a sovereign God. Even so, while man's religion does not make eternal salvation effective, it is vital to the health, length of life, and happiness of a child of God during his lifetime, and so it is called conditional time "salvation."

Chapter IX entitled "What the Gospel is not" proves that God never intended the Bible and gospel preaching (one's religion) to be used to make eternal salvation effective. When one fully understands Chapter X on Total Depravity, then it will be obvious why the gospel and one's religion cannot be an agent to make eternal salvation effective. Based on the total depravity of every human, if God was not totally sovereign in saving His elect for heaven, then no one would be saved eternally.

The remaining chapters will cover a number of different subjects dealing with the consistency in the Bible of a totally sovereign God who eternally saves His children. These chapters also show how God always expects His regenerate children to submit to and obey His commandments during their lifetime. He holds His children accountable regardless of whether they have heard the gospel or not.

These chapters will deal with doctrines that involve both "time" and "eternity."

Chapter IX

What the Gospel is not

The above chapters have attempted to show that the eternal salvation of God's elect children (Ephesians 1:4-6) was settled by God before the foundation of the world and is assured (Romans 8:28-31) without the use of the gospel. The gospel and gospel preaching are involved with the conversion to discipleship of the obedient child of God during their lifetime. However, it is important to remember that many of God's children (saved eternally) are either not obedient to the gospel or they may never hear the gospel preached as in the case of infant deaths, those with mental afflictions, and those in remote parts of the world.

While the above arguments presented in the previous chapters do seem to be conclusive, there are still some scripture references which appear to teach that God uses the gospel (for man's religious practice) as some type of divine instrument infused with a God given power of its own so as to achieve eternal salvation. Many of God's children believe the gospel must be coupled with the "work of the cross," in order to make the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus....effective unto eternal salvation.

In this chapter, we will examine what we believe are the principle passages which appear to teach that God uses the gospel and man's religious practice as a "means" for the child of God to obtain eternal salvation. We must explain the meaning of each verse in light of all other scripture on the subject. Every passage must be taken in context, and the grammar taken exactly as written in the AV 1611 King James Bible. This exercise is necessary

before we can say the doctrine presented in previous chapters fully supports the goals established for this book.

Notice: Most of the material which follows is found in the booklet "Utility of the GOSPEL" by Elder Conrad Jarrell...printed 1977.

Four problem verses for the doctrine presented

Consider the following scriptures that appear to teach that God uses the gospel as a "means" in the spiritual birth.

- *"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."* (James 1:18)
- *"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever....And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."* (1Peter 1:23 and 25)
- *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12)
- *"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."* (1 Corinthians 4:15)

The above verses may lead one to consider that a person is "born again" by the preached word (or the gospel) even though we have given compelling arguments to the contrary. If we remember 2 Peter 1:20, "*Knowing this first,*

that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation”...we understand there are no contradictions in the Bible. With this fact in mind, let us examine the above four verses.

To begin, most of our problems are resolved if we understand which “word” is under consideration in the above scripture. As 2 Timothy 2:15 states, we should be “...*rightly dividing the word of truth.*” Many words will have more than one meaning.

Now, let us examine the word “word.” There are three kinds of “word” used in the Bible...there is the written word, the spoken word, and the living Word. Jesus Christ is the living Word of God. If we can prove the above “word” verses refer to Jesus Christ, the living Word of God, and not to the spoken word, or written word, then, to a great degree, we will have been successful in reconciling these verses.

The fact that Jesus Christ is the Word being referred to in the following two verses is rarely disputed:

1. *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”* (1 John 5:7)
2. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”* (John 1:1-3, 14)

The following should also be obvious: *“Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the Word.”* (Luke 1:2) One cannot be an eyewitness of the written or spoken word, but can be an eyewitness of the living Word. The word *eyewitness* in the original Greek language was used to mean a direct vision of deity...such as in Greek mythology, a character claims he saw Zeus. Jesus was deity. Also, in this context, *“ministers of the Word”*...would mean “body servants” of the living Word...Jesus.

Comments on James 1:18

Using the above logic, James 1:18 is resolved, *“...Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth....”* Jesus did say, *“...I am the way, the Truth, and the life....”* John 14:6. Jesus is the living Word of Truth. James 1:18 could be quoted as follows: Of His own will begat He us by Jesus Christ.

Comments on 1 Peter 1:23, and 25

The verses in 1 Peter can be resolved in the same way as above. In verse 23, we have, *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word (Logos in the original Greek language) of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”* How could a written or spoken word be living? Jesus Christ does live and abide forever. Now, two verses later, in verse 25, we have, *“And this is the word (rhema in Greek) which by the gospel is preached unto you.”* Since the word preached is a different Greek word, this difference should make it clear we are born again by the living Word, Jesus...and informed of this “good news” by the gospel...the written word. This principle is plainly stated as follows:

- *“Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”* (2 Timothy 1:9-10) Could this principle be any clearer?

Only God can give life, without help from the dead alien unregenerate sinner. After all, the spiritually dead are dead. Ephesians 2:1 states, *“And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...”* This good news is brought to light through the gospel.

Comments on Hebrews 4:12

The next bullet quotes Hebrews 4:12 which in part states *“...the Word of God is quick...”*, or alive. The written word cannot be alive. This “Word” must be the living Word of God--Jesus Christ. Also, this verse says that the Word of God is a *“...discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* How could this be the written word? The living Word...Jesus Christ...is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Finally in Hebrews 4:14, we have final proof as follows:

- *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.”* (Hebrews 4:14)

If one reads scripture in context and reads all the scripture on the subject, there should be no problem in reconciling any seeming contradiction.

Comments on 1 Corinthians 4:15

The final verse above to consider states, *“For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.”* This verse seems to have the apostle Paul claiming that he is their spiritual father. However, we remember Jesus said in Matthew 23:9, *“And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”* Now, since Paul is an inspired apostle, he could not say anything contrary to the teachings of Jesus.

Also, in Galatians 4:19, Paul appears to say he is a spiritual mother. This verse states, *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.”* We cannot believe that Paul thought he was spiritual father to the Corinthians, then later tell the Galatians he was their spiritual mother. The answer to this dilemma is found in the verse before the one under consideration...1 Corinthians 4:14, which states, *“I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you...”* The apostle Paul was using figurative language. He was the spiritual father to the Corinthians in the same way that one would say George Washington is the father of our country. No one in the United States seriously considers this statement to mean George Washington is their literal ancestor.

Summation of comments

Hopefully, the above explanation has proven through scripture what the gospel is not. The gospel and gospel preaching is not used in any way by God to assist man to secure a place for the sinner in heaven. God is sovereign and all powerful. He is not hindered in any way by weak and sinful man. However, the gospel is most important for the born again child of God during this life. The gospel

makes conversion possible, offering the penitent sinner fellowship with Jesus and salvation during this life from the wicked world...or as Peter said in Acts 2:40, "...save yourselves from this untoward generation." We know we cannot save ourselves for heaven.

Conclusion

If the above four verses are the most persuasive in the Bible which appear to take the position that the gospel is used by God to offer eternal salvation to the whole human race (and it is my sincere understanding these are the best on this subject)...then it must be obvious these verses teach us something altogether different. The voice of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, the living Word of God...and not the gospel ... calls to life (born again) the elect of God.

- John 5:25 *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."*
- John 6:63 *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

God, alone and unaided, gives spiritual life (being born again).

- *"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:8) Man cannot control the wind...nor can man control the Spirit of God.

To those He chose before the foundation of the world:

- *“According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.”* (Ephesians 1:4-6) In the above passage it states God makes us accepted in Himself, not that we accept God. No Bible verse says we accept Christ! Not even one! Where did this popular misconception originate from?

God performs this directly without man’s assistance.

- *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* (John 1:13)

....through the Spirit, by the voice of the living Word of God....Jesus Christ.

- *“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”* (John 6:63)

The sovereign God of the universe, who created all things in the universe, is also sovereign regarding who He will have in heaven. The elect of God (Ephesians 1:4-6), whether an unborn baby, the mentally handicapped, those in remote parts of the world, or those who in rebellion reject the gospel, every elect child of God is safe as regards eternal salvation. This doctrine is predestination.

To better see God’s sovereignty and predestination, consider the following verse:

- *“For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on who I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on who I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”* (Romans 9:15-16)

God has pre-determined the final eternal destination of His elect children. He will not lose even one. Even so, God’s born again children are responsible and held accountable by God in this life for their own actions. Through the providence of God, events may or may not be changed as a result of prayer. Many examples in scripture prove this fact. *“...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”* (James 5:16)

God has provided the gospel for conversion, to call his children to repent (Acts 3:19), in belief to confess Christ (Romans 10:9), and be baptized (Mark 16:16)... so as to enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Jesus called the Holy Spirit the Comforter in John 14:26) in fellowship with Jesus Christ through the Spirit. What a wonderful salvation for God’s people while in this life!

Restated, in regeneration God gives His children a new nature called *“a new creature”* in 2 Corinthians 5:17: *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* In 2 Corinthians 1:22, this new nature, or “new creature,” is referred to as follows: *“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.”* This down payment (earnest) is referred to in Ephesians 1:14 as follows: *“Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession...”*

The gospel is for conversion and makes it possible for God's obedient children to be added to His church (Acts 2:41) to enjoy the "*earnest of our inheritance*" by experiencing a "little bit of heaven" (our inheritance) while still on earth, by being in fellowship with Jesus Christ (as Rev. 3:20-21), through the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Hopefully this chapter has shown what the gospel is not, as well as, the purpose God actually intended for the gospel. The gospel and our religious practice is for conditional time "salvation."

Chapter X

Total Depravity

We will now consider the total depravity of every person that resulted from the original sin of Adam. This was the first of the five doctrines of grace as given in Chapter III. The natural state of every human refers to their condition as they were physically born into the world not being born again. However, we should also remember some will never be born again, while some will be born again before they are physically born, as in the case of John the Baptist (born again when his mother was six months pregnant).

We know that Adam violated the Law of God, which was recorded in Genesis 2:16-17, as follows: *“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* In the margin of many Bibles, it states that the Hebrew language literally means, “dying thou shalt die.” Three deaths will be suffered. Adam immediately suffered death to fellowship with God. Next he began to physically die, which ended 930 years after he was created. (Genesis 5:5) And finally eternal damnation (known as the second death) would have followed physical death, except for the grace of God.

Death by sin

Notice the sin of Adam, as clearly stated in the Roman letter, *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* (Romans 5:12) As an aside, for any Christian who believes the book of Romans is

literally accurate, this person could not possibly believe in evolution since the Bible states there was no death before the sin of Adam. Evolution teaches that there are millions of years of death before man “evolved.” Both cannot be true. However, this subject is covered in Chapter XIX Creation versus Evolution, beginning on page 223. Also, a considerable number of books are available to the reader on creation science.

To better understand the state of all human beings because of the sin of Adam, consider the statements of David in the book of Psalms.

- *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”* (Psalms 51:5)
- *“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”* (Psalms 58:3) The age of accountability is not taught in scripture. Genesis 8:21 states, *“...the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth....”*

Apparently, the sin of Adam resulted in everyone being physically born spiritually dead (unless God quickens them with the spiritual birth, while in their mother’s womb, as with John the Baptist, recorded in Luke 1:15, 41, 44). To clearly see this particular occurrence (regeneration or being born again), notice in Ephesians where the spiritual birth is under consideration. In this case, a person was dead in trespasses and sins, as follows:

- *“And you hath he quickened; who were dead in trespasses and sins: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now*

worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Notice above that a person not born again is by nature a child of wrath. Only God can quicken, or give life. The above verse states, “*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.*” The dead are dead, not even a “spark of life” is present. Death does not exist in degrees as in dead, deader and deadest. The dead are simply dead! The unregenerate (spiritually dead) hate God (Romans 8:7) and love evil (John 3:19). The giving of life to the dead is something that only God can do, and it occurs for the elect of God at some age between conception and death. This fact should be obvious. Those physically born do not assist their natural parents or God with the process of their physical birth. The spiritual birth is even more of a miracle, since this spiritual life will live forever and is not capable of committing sin, as follows: “*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*” (1 John 3:9) Refer to Romans 7:15-25 to see more on the two natures (carnal and spiritual) of a born again person.

Foreknowledge

There are some people who think that God, who can see the future, looked down through time to see who would seek Him (even though we have shown above that the spiritually dead cannot seek God). Based on this misunderstood type of “foreknowledge,” God is supposed to have elected for heaven, those who would seek Him. To prove this position, several verses are used, such as

Romans 8:29, 1 Peter 1:2, II Timothy 2:19, and I Corinthians 8:3. The verse in Romans states, *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, etc.”* (Romans 8:29) These verses actually mean God “foreknew” those He chose from before the foundation of the world, as follows: *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”* (Ephesians 1:4) Foreknowledge in the above verses means these individuals were the objects of God’s love, as a man “knows” his wife. God’s seeing into the future, does not mean He knew who would accept Him in faith. Notice the words of Jesus, *“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”* (Matthew 7:22-23) Jesus, as God manifest in flesh, knows everything. He knew about these people. He knew these wicked people were not the object of his love. The “foreknowledge” of God simply is God “knowing” the elect individuals He loved from before the foundation of the world, as given in Ephesians 1:4, (quoted above).

Another problem exists with this line of reasoning, which says since God can see the future; He has looked down through time to see if any would seek after Him (even though we have shown above that the dead cannot seek God). The following is God’s statement on what He saw when he looked down from heaven, through time.

- *“The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good,*

no not one.” (Psalms 14:2-3) God states no one will seek after God. No one will “accept Him as their personal saviour” unless they are already born again. No verse in the Bible says that man accepts God. The elect of God are, “*made accepted in the beloved*” as stated in Ephesians 1:6.

Apparently, if a person is not born again, it is not possible for him to please God. God chose His children from before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) One might question if God is unrighteous to hold this position. The unborn have had no chance to exercise their “free will.” Notice what scripture says on this subject.

- *“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”* (Romans 9:11-16) Man’s will makes no difference! Only God’s will matters, as follows: *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* (John 1:13) This verse could not be clearer!

Unregenerate man cannot understand, hear or believe

Apparently, the natural man (not born again) will not seek after God. This condition is further confirmed, as follows:

- *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* (1 Corinthians 2:14) Spiritual discernment is not a matter of their decision.

The above verse states the natural man (not born again) cannot understand spiritual things. Also, we have seen as quoted above that the natural man will not seek after God. However, some people still contend that if given the chance, some will accept Christ if they hear the gospel (good news of Christ) and believe what is preached. Jesus states otherwise,

- *“Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.”* (John 8:43-44) There is a huge difference between “cannot” and “will not” hear. Clearly, Jesus is speaking to people who are not born again (not born of the Spirit of God). Jesus continues speaking to these unregenerate people, *“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”* (John 8:46-47) Jesus says they do not have the ability. It is not a matter of their decision.
- *“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”* (John 10:25-26) Jesus says they do not have the ability. It is not a matter of their decision.

From the above, we hear from the mouth of Jesus why the unregenerate (not born again) do not understand and believe Him. They do not understand because they cannot hear His word. They do not believe, because they are not of His sheep. They were not chosen by the Father before the foundation of the world, as stated in Ephesians 1:4-6. They were not born of the Spirit of God, as described in John 3:8 and Ephesians 2:1. God, and God alone, saves one eternally for heaven. The unregenerate hate God and do not want to be saved. Their *“carnal mind is enmity against God.”* (Romans 8:7)

It appears a person who is not born again cannot go to Jesus (they have no such desire) and accept Him as their personal saviour. Is there a verse that clearly states this fact? Yes! Consider the words of Jesus.

- *“And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”* (John 6:65) This verse may offend some people. It did even in the day when Jesus himself made that statement. Notice the very next verse: *“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”* (John 6:66) Jesus' disciples left Him even after they saw the miracles (described a few verses earlier) performed by Jesus, as when He fed the five thousand. (John 6:10) After this event, they would have taken Him by force, and made Him a king. (John 6:15)

Other total depravity verses

There are other verses that clearly state the “total depravity” of man. Please consider the following:

- *“How can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4)*
- *“The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous....” (Psalms 10:4-5)*
- *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” (Isaiah 64:6)*
- *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” (Jeremiah 13:23)*
- *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” (Ecclesiastes 7:20)*
- *“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” (Proverbs 14:12)*
- *“As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Romans 3:10-18)*

- *“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”* (Romans 8:6-8)

Conclusion

The natural man (not born again) is totally depraved and spiritually dead. He is completely unable to save himself in any way and does not desire to be saved. He does not seek God (Psalms 10:4-5 & 14:2-3). Spiritual matters such as “preaching of the cross” are foolishness to him (1 Corinthians 1:18), and he cannot discern spiritual matters (1 Corinthians 2:14). His carnal mind is at enmity against God (Romans 8:7); he cannot please God (Romans 8:8), and he does not fear God (Romans 3:18). He is not subject to the law of God (Romans 8:7). He is vanity and less than nothing to God, and his righteousnesses are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). He is hated (Romans 9:13 & Malachi 1:3) and abhorred by God (Psalms 5:6).

If one is to be saved eternally, it should be obvious that salvation is only possible by God alone and unaided. There will be no paradox when the above Bible verses on total depravity are remembered. Our religious practice can have no place in securing eternal salvation. It is easy to remember that until we are alive in Christ from the sovereign work of God in regeneration, we are simply spiritually dead. The dead can do nothing to help themselves.

Once alive in Christ, and therefore eternally saved, the gospel is sent to offer the child of God the possibility of conversion unto salvation, to become a disciple of Christ in

the Lord's church. This involves belief that Jesus is the Son of God and obedience to the commandments. This aspect of salvation occurs during one's lifetime, so it may be referred to as conditional time "salvation." The term "conditional" is used because the condition that must be met is obedience to God's commandments. A regenerate child of God may reject it or embrace it. Once embraced to become a disciple in the Lord's church, it may later be lost through sinful living that will result in the chastening rod of God as given in Hebrews 10:26-31. One may not "persevere" in gospel obedience, and even die in this condition. Fortunately, God's children are "preserved" in Christ Jesus, so heaven is their home regardless of what happens in this life. We are saved by sovereign grace.

Chapter XI Unconditional Election

God's election of those individuals who will spend eternity with Him in heaven is not clearly understood by many people. The Protestant Reformation which was Calvinistic believed in unconditional election as do Primitive Baptists today. Important Bible verses on this doctrine follow:

- 1 Peter 1:2 *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."*
- Ephesians 1:4-6 *"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."*
- Romans 8:33 *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."*

To see how modern day Calvinists have retreated from the historic Bible position on unconditional election, consider the article by Dr. R. C. Sproul titled "Just 'Cause." This article appeared in the March 2001 issue of *Tabletalk*, published by Ligonier Ministries. Unconditional election literally means God elected a people for eternal salvation (Ephesians 1:4-6 above) based on no prior condition or action He foresaw the elect individual would possess or perform. In the last paragraph of this *Tabletalk* article Dr. Sproul ruins his argument in my opinion by introducing so

called “secondary causes” such as proclamation of the Word and work of the ministry. If God foresaw an individual would respond positively to this “secondary cause,” then response is in itself a condition that would be a basis for electing the person in the first place. (I know of no Bible scripture that supports this position.)

Let’s consider this article. Dr. Sproul starts by observing that God is the first cause of everything. He states the Bible does not begin by saying, “In the beginning nothing,” because there would still be nothing. You can’t get something from nothing. The Bible begins with, “In the beginning God...” God is the first cause. Dr. Sproul is right up to this point.

An argument Dr. Sproul makes is to recognize the law of cause and effect and how it relates to unconditional election. He says the most common view (which has no scriptural basis that I know of) is that “God elected those whom He saw, down through the corridor of time, would choose Him.” He then tries to justify this position by stating that “God is the first cause,” and in every case you can imagine, “the trail will lead back to God.” He then makes the observation written in large letters, “If He foresaw that I would choose Him because of my piety, He was foreseeing the necessary fruit of the piety that He gave me in the first place.”

While the above observation may seem logical, it fails to recognize total depravity of the unregenerate as given in Chapter X entitled Total Depravity beginning on page 118. Also, it fails to recognize that God did look down through the corridor of time to see if any would seek Him, and what God saw was given in Psalm 14:2-3 as follows:

- *“The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”* Romans 3:10-18 essentially says the same thing.

Another comment by Dr. Sproul states “In short, if there were conditions for election, then God determined who would meet those conditions.” I know of no scripture to support this statement of Dr. Sproul. He follows this with “Unconditional election is simply another way of saying that God is the sovereign one, and that He alone is the ultimate cause of whatever comes to pass.” I would say unconditional election simply means there are no conditions for which God should choose anyone. A good Bible verse to explain why we love God is as follows:

- I John 4:19 *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* It does not say the opposite.

Instead of trying to establish some basis for God to choose the elect, Dr. Sproul could have just said there are no conditions other than His grace and mercy based on the following:

- Titus 3:5 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”*

Secondary causes

As mentioned earlier, the last paragraph of the article by Dr. Sproul ruins his whole argument, in my opinion. This

complete paragraph in which he introduces “secondary causes” is as follows:

- “Unconditional election is simply another way of saying that God is the sovereign one, and that He alone is the ultimate cause of whatsoever comes to pass. To be sure, He uses secondary causes: the faithful proclamation of the Word, the heartfelt prayers of the saints, the work of the apologists and preachers, ads on the radio, even the consciences of the yet-unregenerate elect. But it is He who uses these things to bring about what He purposed from before all time, when there was God and nothing else.”

In my opinion, Dr. Sproul should have stated in the last paragraph, “To be sure” there could be no secondary causes, because of total depravity resulting from the sin of Adam. A Calvinist believes in total depravity, since it is the first point of the five points of Calvinism. Apparently, Calvinists somehow believe that God overlooks total depravity in the unregenerate elect by using “gospel means” to obtain spiritual life. Consider how the Bible describes the unregenerate and the extent of total depravity. The unregenerate cannot hear, understand, or believe spiritual things and they hate God.

- John 8:47 *“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”* (Notice that Jesus did not say if they would only listen and believe Him, they could then become a child of God.)
- 1 Corinthians 2:14 *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness*

unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- John 10:26-30 *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.”* (Notice Jesus did not say if you would only believe in me, then you could become one of my sheep.)
- Romans 8:7-8 *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”*

How could the gospel and “secondary causes” help those described above? Is it not obvious that God must first give the person spiritual life? Life comes first and then comes the possibility of action. This principle applies to physical life as well as spiritual life.

Dr. Sproul saw that cause and effect rules the world we live in. For instance, consider a real world example. A lamp is out. The effect or evidence is no light comes from the lamp. The causes could be a burned-out light bulb, faulty wiring, unavailable power, etc. One must consider if something is the cause of an occurrence, or if it is the effect or evidence that points us back to the cause. It cannot be both. You could not say the lack of light is the cause of the problem with the lamp. Dr. R. C. Sproul just did not take cause and effect to its logical conclusion in the

Bible. If a person is a believer (by responding in a positive way to the gospel), the following verses will show that this belief is an evidence (or effect) of spiritual life, as opposed to being the cause (secondary cause) of spiritual life:

- 1 John 5:1 *“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”*
- John 5:24 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”*
- John 6:47 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”*
- Acts 13:48 *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”*

Something cannot be both the cause as well as the effect of an occurrence. The above verses do not speak of our decision to cause or do anything, but rather are very clear in pointing out that our belief is evidence that we are already born again. The effect or evidence is that we believe. The cause for our belief is that God has given us spiritual life, as follows:

- Ephesians 2:1 *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:”*

The “dead” referred to in the above verse can do nothing for themselves, because they are simply dead. For instance, if someone could tell me what they did to be born

into their earthly family, then I could tell them what one must do to be born into the family of God. The answer in both cases is absolutely nothing. As a reminder, if one would ask why we love God, the answer is, *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19) It’s not the other way around as many would have you believe. The unregenerate hate God as stated in the follow verse:

- Romans 8:7 *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”*

The unregenerate are enemies of God as follows:

- Romans 5:10 *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”*

The unregenerate not only hate God and are the enemy of God, but also their opinion of God is as described in the book of Job as follows:

- Job 21:12-16 *“They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.”*

Hopefully, the above verses make it clear that God does not use “secondary causes” for eternal salvation. (God does not need help from anyone.) We did not help God in

the creation of the world. In the same way, God does not need us to help Him in the spiritual creation of a child of God. Consider the following:

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* This new creature is a new creation.

Calvinism

My understanding from Elder Harold Hunt as also confirmed by my own personal experience is that a new form of Calvinism is being promoted which attests that regeneration for the elect of God takes place first, and then conversion occurs (and never fails to occur) at some later time. Calvinists believe that eventually God in His sovereign power insures that every regenerate child of God will hear the gospel preached and will be obedient to the gospel commands unto conversion. In other words, predestination applies to both regeneration and conversion. If a person never responds to the gospel during their lifetime, he or she was never regenerated in the first place.

In order for the reader to understand Primitive Baptist doctrine on this point, we contend that predestination refers only to regeneration. For a scriptural reference, it should be noted that Romans 8:28-31 begins with those that are *“called according to his purpose”* and proceeds to list the sequence of foreknowledge, predestination, called, justified, and glorified. Verse 31 states *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us.”* Conversion is not included in this sequence of verses since conversion to discipleship may never occur.

Every elect child of God (Ephesians 1:4-6) will be given spiritual life by God (John 3:3, 8, Ephesians 2:1, John 5:25, and John 6:63) sometime between conception and death. I do not believe every regenerate child of God (heaven bound) will be converted to a knowledge of the truth and become a disciple of Christ in His church. Some will be aborted before birth, some will die while infants, and some will have a mental affliction that prevents them from understanding the gospel message. Further, some of God's regenerate children will live in a remote part of the world and never hear the gospel preached. Some of God's children who hear the gospel, will be disobedient to gospel commands for various reasons; however, while they will suffer in this life for rebellion against God (Hebrews 10:26-31), they will still go to heaven after death.

Many people are unaware of the above doctrine as believed by Primitive Baptists. Many believe there are only two beliefs, Calvinism and Arminianism. Recently Elder Harold Hunt gave a good explanation of the two beliefs, so I will quote him. The Arminian says, "If you are saved you must hear the gospel and believe it, and it is up to you whether you do." The Calvinist says, "If you are saved you must hear the gospel and believe it, and God will see to it that you do." Elder Hunt states "Both insist the sinner must participate in the work. Both leave the sinner sufficient ground for boasting that he did his part. To be sure, the Arminian leaves much more room for boasting, but the Calvinist leaves enough room to satisfy his followers. God's doctrine teaches that God is the one and only Saviour; He does not need man's help, or his participation." Elder Hunt quotes Isaiah 63:5 as follows:

- Isaiah 63:5 *"And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold:*

therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me.”

Conclusion

This difference between the beliefs of a Calvinist and a Primitive Baptist may be defined as follows: The Calvinist would say if God's children did not submit to the roll of discipleship, then they were not God's children in the first place. I guess for a Calvinist this would mean the chastisement verses given in Hebrews 10:26-31 and in Hebrews 12:5-11 refer to eternal damnation.

A Primitive Baptist would say God's children should be obedient to the gospel commands by becoming disciples of Christ. However, not all of God's children will submit and be obedient. Disobedience by God's children will be paid for in this life by unhappiness. Chastisement verses refer to suffering by God's people in this life, not eternal damnation. One should read Hebrews 10:26-31 and Hebrews 12:5-11 and judge for himself if this refers to suffering by God's children in this life, or if it refers to eternal damnation for the unregenerate.

If the Calvinist believes that the gospel and gospel preaching is required for someone to become born again, then surely he must see that both the preacher and the person who responds to the gospel call have a lot to boast about (as Elder Harold Hunt observed). They seem to forget the following verse in Ephesians:

- Ephesians 2:8-9 *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

They may think of themselves as instruments used by God in getting the elect's name in the Lambs Book of Life. However, these names were written before the foundation of the world. Apparently Calvinists have found a way of getting around this problem in their own mind, so they can share with God the glory of eternal salvation. This temptation began in the garden of Eden, Genesis 3:5, "...and ye shall be as gods."

God's children should be content just to have the privilege mentioned in this verse: *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."* (Matthew 16:24)

His disciples are only a very small number.

- Luke 12:32 *"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."*

Heaven will not contain a "little flock." In heaven, God will have a great number, as follows:

- Revelation 7:9 *"After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;"*

All glory and honor is due our Saviour Jesus Christ. Our religious practice does not save us, it is only the man Christ Jesus. We should be disciples of Christ because we love Him and want to honor and worship Him while we live in this present evil world. We fear and respect Him and want to avoid chastisement that will result from our living a sinful life. But primarily, we just love Him and recognize that life has no meaning without Him.

Chapter XII Regeneration versus Conversion

The five stages involved in the salvation of God's people are covered in Chapter IV entitled "Salvation," beginning on page 54. This particular chapter will contrast the difference between "regeneration" (third stage) and "conversion" (fifth stage). "Conversion" as covered in a number of previous chapters is gospel conversion unto discipleship in the Lord's church for a blessing in this life. It is an aspect of salvation called conditional time "salvation."

Regeneration

To review, regeneration (phase three) by God is not conditioned on any act or action by man, as this is the work of God alone. Regeneration produces spiritual life (being born again) which is part of the process of eternal salvation provided for the elect of God as Jesus mentions to Nicodemus in the gospel of John:

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

For a person to be born of the Spirit of God, he cannot possibly assist God in any way, or perform any action of any type that will be used by God in this occurrence. Nicodemus did not understand Jesus' saying that a person must be "born again," as evidenced by his statement:

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

Jesus gives the answer several verses later:

- John 3:7-8 *“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”*

Notice that Jesus compares being born again to the action of the wind. No one can tell where the wind comes from or where it will go. Jesus says further, *“so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* This means everyone is born of the Spirit in the same way, and there are no special cases or exceptions. A popular misconception is that if you will accept Christ as your personal saviour, and invite Him into your heart, then you will be “born again.” The position that man must accept God not only contradicts what Jesus told Nicodemus in the eighth verse above, but also is not supported by any Bible verse. In fact, Jesus says no man could go to Him unless the Father gave him the ability to do so:

- John 6:65 *“And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”*

The above statements by Jesus should settle this issue, but if there are still some doubts about the actions of man helping or hindering God in giving the spiritual birth, consider the following verses:

- Titus 3:5 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”*

- II Timothy 1:9 *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”*

Notice what Jesus prays just before He is crucified:

- John 17:1-2 *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”*

If Jesus has power over all flesh, then He could do anything He wanted to do. Jesus next tells us what He wants to do. He says He will *“give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”* As many as means not one more and not one less than was given Him by God the Father.

Spiritual life is given directly by Jesus Christ as He said He would do in the above verse John 17:2. Notice the words of Jesus concerning spiritual life in the following verse:

- John 5:25 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”*

Spiritual life is not given through the words of Jesus repeated by a man or a preacher, since flesh and blood (humans) can add no profit to the process. Only the words spoken by Jesus Himself through the Holy Spirit matter in regeneration. Notice what Jesus said in this next verse:

- John 6:63 *“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”*

God is the only giver of spiritual life. When a person is dead, either physically or spiritually, he can do nothing. Also, he cannot receive any form of help from any other human to assist God in giving life.

As a matter of fact, God gives a number of different expressions to explain to us how we receive this spiritual life. While talking to Nicodemus Jesus compared it to our physical birth. We learned from the above quoted verses that it came from the voice of the Son of God through the Holy Spirit. Next, we find that it is a translation. Notice this verse:

- Colossians 1:13 *“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”*

In addition to this, the obtaining of spiritual life is described as a quickening in the following verse:

- Ephesians 2:1 *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”*

After considering the above descriptions of how we receive spiritual life, as by being born again, regenerated, the voice of the Son of God, quickened or translated, we realized that for each of these expressions to describe the same thing, it has to be an event which happened in an instant. If the event took place over some period of time, like nine months, then it could not be described as a translation or quickening.

Further, we learn that the decision to cause one to be born again was made by God and was not made by any human. Consider this verse:

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

The above Bible verses clearly show that our good works have no favorable influence on God, nor do they play even the smallest role in achieving spiritual life. The event happens in an instant, and we can do nothing to prevent God from giving us the spiritual birth. In fact, every elect child of God receives the spiritual birth at a time when he hates God and is an enemy of God. Notice the following:

- Romans 5:10 *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”*

Before we receive the spiritual birth, our carnal mind hates God:

- Romans 8:7-8 *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”*

In the unregenerate state, the gospel can be of no help since this person cannot hear, understand, or believe spiritual things, as follows:

- John 8:47 *“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”*
- I Corinthians 2:14 *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness*

unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

- John 10:26 *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”*

Conversion

Conversion is a process in which the regenerate child of God (already saved eternally) turns from sinning against Christ to attempting to follow Christ. This conversion has to do with the child of God becoming a disciple of Christ by being obedient to the gospel message. Conversion also involves the form of worship he must follow. The child of God has much work and many actions to perform. He must repent of his sins:

- Acts 3:19 *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”*

The child of God must confess Christ. The reader should be aware that to confess Christ is not the same thing as to accept Christ. Notice the following verse:

- Romans 10:9 *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”*

The child of God, as a believer, must submit to baptism, as below:

- Mark 16:16 *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*

Notice that our belief of the gospel unto baptism by following Christ as a disciple into His church yields salvation, as stated in the above verses. This salvation is not eternal, because the child of God already possesses eternal life, but rather is an aspect of salvation that can be enjoyed in this life, so it is called conditional time “salvation.” This aspect of salvation is from this “*untoward*” (stubborn or unruly) generation, and is one that a person can achieve for himself, as Peter preached in Acts:

- Acts 2:38 *“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*
- Acts 2:40 *“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*

The number of Bible verses already quoted obviously demonstrates that we cannot save ourselves eternally. Also, considering all the righteous works a person must perform in the conversion process, as given above, the verses show that conversion is not the same thing as regeneration or the spiritual birth. We remember the following Bible verses already quoted above:

- Titus 3:5 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”*
- II Timothy 1:9 *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but*

according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”

Clearly, the value of religious conversion and the method of worship have to do with benefits or suffering in this life for God's born again children. For this reason, it is called conditional time "salvation." We learn from scripture that, as children of God, we have set before us the opportunity of obeying God's commandments and enjoying a life with blessings from God. On the other hand, if we rebel against God and do not obey His commandments, we will suffer in this life. This suffering will not be eternal in hell, but temporal in this life, possibly resulting in death. Notice the warning given below:

- Hebrews 10:26-31 *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

The above warning for God's children in the New Testament was nothing new, because God's people in the Old Testament (the children of Israel), were given a similar warning. This warning was given by Moses before the

children of Israel crossed over the river Jordan to possess the Promised Land. To see this fact stated clearly by God, notice the following:

- Deuteronomy 30:15-19 *“See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:”* (Verse 31:1 says *“And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.”*)

God is not telling His people they will suffer eternal damnation. God’s people already have spiritual life or eternal life. Eternal means it is non-ending. God makes it clear He is referring to things in this life by saying *“ye shall not prolong your days upon the land,”* as opposed to eternal damnation. This refers to “time” by living a longer life. When God begins a work in the heart of one of His elect children, He will finish it to the end, as stated below:

- Philippians 1:6 *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”*

The Role of Religion

The above scripture and other previous arguments clearly show that our religious practices have no affect at all on whether we will go to heaven or go to hell. If nothing we do in this life can affect our eternal destiny, then why do we work so hard in an effort to follow God's commandments? I will attempt to answer this question.

If we love the Lord and believe that we are His children, we should live good, God-honoring lives out of appreciation for what He did for us. The motivation should be from love. Regardless, before we reach this point, I believe in many cases we learn that we are one of His children at the time we break God's commandments. When we break God's commandments, all hell breaks loose, everything goes wrong, and we suffer. We feel we are being punished for something, which, in fact, is exactly the case. Notice the following Bible verses:

- Hebrews 12:5-11 *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be*

partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

The regenerate child of God who has never heard the gospel message may first become aware of God’s presence through the chastening rod of God, as given above. Also, we know God (without being told about Him) because God puts His laws directly into our mind at regeneration. Notice these verses:

- Hebrews 8:10-11 *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.”*

God has a way of dealing with His regenerate children who have not actually heard the gospel message or God’s laws. These regenerate children include those who have died by abortion, died at a young age, or even those who may have lived a full life in a remote location without ever having heard the law of God or the gospel message, as follows:

- Romans 2:12-16 *“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the*

law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

Notice the process of sanctification by God that takes place even without the gospel and religious conversion. Even so, for a born again child of God, one of the greatest gifts we have in this life is the gospel. It offers the child of God comfort, healing, spiritual nourishment to grow in grace and understanding, and best of all, fellowship with Jesus Christ in His church. (Revelation 3:19-22)

Based on the above brief explanation, we see that while our religious practice (our worship of God) has nothing to do with obtaining eternal life for God’s elect children, it has everything to do with our welfare in this life as well as how long we live. Elder Harold Hunt was quoted in the conclusion of Chapter I on this point. He also noted further benefits to “nations, of entire civilizations and cultures” that results from preaching the gospel and the obedience of God’s people within these nations and cultures. Notice the following verse on this subject:

- 2 Chronicles 7:14 *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”*

Even though the nation of Israel was warned by God (Deuteronomy 30:15-19, quoted on page 147) concerning

the necessity that they be obedient to God's Laws before they possessed the Promised Land, in the opening chapters of Judges we find that they violated this warning time and time again, and suffered the consequences (timely, not eternal), as follows:

- Judges 2:13-14 *“And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies.”*

The tremendous benefit to nations that occurred during the Protestant Reformation as a result of gospel preaching and the gospel conversion of God's people is interesting to study. Those nations that embraced the Reformation were blessed to enjoy the Industrial Revolution. Nations like Spain that did not, also did not enjoy the Industrial Revolution. America has been tremendously blessed since our beginning. Notice the nations of Central and South America over the past two hundred years. These nations are rich in natural resources, but the argument could be made that their religion is the problem. This can be seen in nations all over the world today where various different pagan religions are worshiped. As Elder Hunt observed, “every other consideration fades into nothingness compared with the influence of the gospel.”

Now, let's review briefly three periods of time and the three forms of worship God established for these periods. The method of worship that God established for the period from Adam to Moses was the sacrifice of a lamb on an altar by the head of the family. This sacrifice pictured the Lamb of

God who would take away the sin of the (elect) world, as stated many years later by John the Baptist:

- John 1:29 *“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”*

Next, the Levitical priesthood began with Moses. To make it clear to God’s people that God was introducing a change in the worship service, God performed miracles through Moses covering a period of forty years. These miracles began when the plagues against the Egyptian people set the children of Israel free from Egyptian bondage. Next, Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and God parted the Red Sea with a wall of water on either side as they passed through. The walls of water later collapsed and drowned the entire Egyptian army (Exodus 14:29-30). God then provided the children of Israel food and water, and ensured that their clothes and shoes did not deteriorate (Deuteronomy 29:5). These miracles showed that God was the author of this change in the worship service or priesthood. The Levitical priesthood with all its rituals was a pattern (Hebrews 9:23-24) that pictured what Christ would actually do for the elect of God in all ages (since Adam).

The appearance of Christ ushered in the Melchisedec priesthood as the final change in the form of worship acceptable to God and is explained in great detail in Hebrews Chapters 7-10. To show God initiated this change, He provided another period of miracles lasting forty years, which began with the miracles of Jesus. In performing the miracles, Jesus demonstrated He was God manifest in flesh, and He also claimed to be God, as in the gospel of John:

- John 10:30 *“I and my Father are one.”*

The forty years of miracles performed by God through the apostles included their raising the dead, and healing the sick. To note the end of this forty year period, at the time the New Testament book Philippians was written, we notice that Paul thanked God that the life of Epaphroditus was spared when he was sick *“nigh unto death.”* Paul’s God given ability to heal the sick during the forty year period of miracles had ended, as made clear:

- Philippians 2:27 *“For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”*

Conclusion

Hopefully I have shown the difference between regeneration and conversion. These terms are not the same thing. Regeneration is by God alone and achieves eternal salvation for the elect of God, without the loss of one. Conversion is for conditional time “salvation,” and it is a process the child of God should perform and maintain so as to be a disciple of Christ. Not all of God’s regenerate children will be blessed to hear the gospel message. Many will die young or have a mental affliction to prevent understanding. Some will hear it and choose to reject it. As a result of this disobedience they may suffer, they may have their lives shortened, or they may wish their lives were ended. As Hebrews 10:31 says, *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

A disciple of Christ is called a Christian, as noted below:

- Acts 11:26 *“And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”*

As noted above, not all of God’s regenerate children will become disciples of Christ, or as they are called, Christians. Predestination is not involved. God has many children who are not Christians since they do not publicly acknowledge Christ. They may have heard the gospel, but have rejected it. The ones that rejected the gospel may have chosen to follow other religious orders, as with the Jews or other eastern religions. In this case, these children of God are regenerate, but they have not been converted to a knowledge of the truth. They are not Christians, but they are still God’s children. Some may have even been Christians at one time, but have backslidden and fallen away from the truth to other religions or to no religion. Unlike eternal salvation, the aspect of salvation gained by conversion, called time “salvation,” which offers great benefits in this life, can be lost.

We need to keep in mind that regeneration is by God alone for His elect children chosen before the foundation of the world (predestinated), and nothing in this life can prevent or alter the outcome intended by God. There is no paradox, since man is not involved.

Chapter XIII Baptism

The purpose of the following will be an attempt to clarify the true meaning of New Testament baptism. There are many “Christian” denominations in the United States, and every one teaches some form of baptism. Notice in this chapter there will be given two principles and four essentials that have to do with baptism. Hopefully the following will shed some light on this subject, and give a scriptural basis to better understand baptism.

Two Principles

There are two very important principles one must remember when considering baptism, which are as follows:

- 1) Baptism is necessary for one to become a New Testament church member (this has nothing to do with being “born again,” or becoming a child of God).
- 2) Baptism is a figure, which pictures a reality. To prove the above two principles, consider the following scripture:

I. Baptism is necessary.

In the “great commission” we read, *“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”* (Matthew 28:18-19) Also, we read, *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:15-16) Baptism is necessary since Jesus commanded it. For an example, beginning in

Acts 2:14, Peter preached to a great crowd. In Acts 2:38, Peter said, *“Repent, and be baptized, etc.”* The 41st verse stated, *“Then as many that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”* Finally, in Acts 2:47 it states, *“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* Baptism is necessary for church membership.

II. Baptism is a figure.

Scripture states, *“Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”* (1Peter 3:20-21) Notice it did not say Noah’s family was saved by the ark from the water (flood). It said they were *“saved by water.”* The salvation *“by water”* for those on the ark could only be a salvation from the wicked, untoward generation of that day. The salvation gained by baptism must also be the same, from the wicked world we live in, and not an eternal salvation. This is confirmed by the admonition Peter gave in his day in Acts 2:38-40. Verse 2:38 starts by stating: *“Repent, and be baptized...,”* then he states in Acts 2:40, *“Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*

As Elder Harold Hunt has written, “It (baptism) is a figure of the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord, and it is a figure of the child of God, dying to sin, and rising to walk in newness of life.” The person being baptized is demonstrating what his Lord did for him, and he is showing, by demonstration, what he intends to do for his Lord, during the remainder of his life. He is professing that

he will leave his carnal flesh nature in the watery grave, and “walk” after the Spirit, remembering the God given fruits of the Spirit (*“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* Galatians 5:22-23) he received when he was regenerated (Titus 3:5), or born again (John 3:3, 8).

The principle that baptism is a figure is made very clear in Romans, as follows: *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”* (Romans 6:4-5) It is helpful to read the first twelve verses of Romans 6, if one is to better understand the context. Baptism as a figure is very clear, and it will save us from this untoward (wicked) generation we live in today.

Four Essentials

The four essentials of baptism are as follows: 1) Mode, 2) Subject, 3) Object, and 4) Administrator. We need to understand each of these essentials in light of the scriptures. Consider the following:

I. Mode

The Greek word “bapto,” primary verb meaning is to “cover wholly with a fluid.” An interesting point to consider is that historically the Greek Orthodox Church has always considered immersion (not sprinkling or pouring) the correct mode for baptism. Since the New Testament was first written in the Greek language, possibly they

understood the actual meaning of this Greek word. Even so, to settle one's mind as to which mode is intended by Bible scripture, one should decide which mode better fits the figure being portrayed. If the mode of baptism is immersion or submersion of the individual under water (as compared to sprinkling or pouring water on the person), does this mode better fit the figure being given in scripture? The first twelve verses of Romans 6 should make it very clear that immersion better fits the figure of death, burial, and resurrection. The first part of Romans 6:4 states, *"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, etc."* I believe that only immersion is a picture, or figure, of death and burial. Sprinkling or pouring water on a person is not a figure, or rather, it does not symbolize burial in the ground; however, burial in water does appear to symbolize, or figure, burial in the ground.

For additional examples in scripture, notice the wording referring to the baptism of Jesus, *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: etc."* (Matthew 3:16) Jesus must have been completely covered with water since He went up out of the water, again showing the picture of a burial and resurrection. Also, it is obvious that much water was needed in order to perform gospel baptism, as follows: *"And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: etc."* (John 3:23) To sprinkle or pour, only a little water is needed. The same was mentioned when Philip baptized the eunuch, Acts 8:38-39, it says, *"...they went down both into the water, ...And when they were come up out of the water, etc."* These three scenes of baptism in the scripture are consistent with the position that immersion is required for scriptural baptism.

II. Subject.

The person, or subject to be baptized, must be a “believer” in the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of this, the person being baptized cannot be a baby. The person must be old enough to understand and believe. The primary proof text is as follows: *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* (Mark 16:15-16) Every place where “creature” is used in the New Testament to refer to humans, it refers to a born again person (such as II Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, and Colossians 1:15). Also, a person who is a believer is a person that is already born again.

To prove a believer is already born again, refer to John 5:24, 1 John 5:1 and Acts 13:48. John 5:24 states, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”* Our faith, or belief in God, is proof we are already children of God. Our faith is a “fruit of the Spirit,” or is something that proceeds forth from the Spirit of God within a born again person, as given in Galatians 5:22-23. Notice that “faith” is the seventh fruit listed as fruits of the Spirit. For those children of God who have the ability to believe but do not (reject the gospel) and will not submit to baptism, Mark 16:16 states they will be damned. This damnation for a child of God is damnation in this life as Paul warned the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 11:29 which states, *“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”* A child of God already has eternal life; however, if they are disobedient to God’s laws, they will

suffer damnation in this life. This is clearly stated by Hebrews 10:26-31, *“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy unto two or three witnesses.... It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* This is a warning for God’s people.

For two excellent references to prove that only a believer should be baptized, consider: 1) *“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”* (Acts 8:12) and 2) Philip began at Isaiah 53 and taught the Ethiopian eunuch about Jesus. Then, *“they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* (Acts 8:36-37) For someone to be baptized, they must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They must believe that Jesus was literally God manifest in the flesh. They should repent of their sins, as in Acts 3:19, and confess Christ, as in Romans 10:9. (Notice how this is not possible for a baby.)

III. Object

The object of baptism is the “true” Jesus Christ of the Bible. This recognizes that there are false Christ’s which are preached. For instance, *“And Jesus answered and said unto them, take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”* (Matthew 24:4-5) Also there is a false gospel, which teaches a false Christ, as given in Galatians

1:8-9, *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”* Also consider, *“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”* (2 Corinthians 11:4)

For an example of two different Christ's, consider the following: 1) One Christ died for the whole human world in order to make a way of eternal salvation possible for any person who will accept Him as their personal saviour. Scripture does not support this position. 2) There is another Christ, which I think is the true Christ, that claims He came to save those given to Him (John 6:37-38) by the Father (chosen by God before the foundation of the world, as in Ephesians 1:4-6). Notice the wording of the prayer offered by Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane just before He was crucified, as follows: *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given Him.* (Notice, it does not say, to as many as will accept Christ as their personal saviour) *And this is life eternal, etc.”* (John 17:1-3) These are obviously two different Christ's; therefore, the object of the baptism, if one is truly baptized, must be to the one that is the true Christ. Is the true Christ the one who is begging to be accepted, or is it the one who is victorious; the one who declares He saved those given Him by the Father? There is only one Christ.... All others are false Christ's. Baptism into a false Christ, is no baptism

at all. One should study Bible doctrine, and insure that the Christ they worship is consistent with Bible scripture.

IV. Administrator

It is necessary that the person administering the baptism be an ordained minister of the Lord's church. Jesus commanded the eleven disciples (Matthew 28:16) as follows: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. Amen."* (Matthew 28:19-20) If they were to teach all things whatsoever He commanded, then nothing can be left out. If they were to teach only what He commanded, then nothing can be added.

The ones, as noted above, whom Christ told to teach, He also told to baptize. In 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Paul gives the qualifications for bishops and deacons. They are very similar, except the deacon does not need to be *"apt to teach."* Therefore the deacon is not authorized to baptize. Women are excluded, since Paul stated, *"But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve."* (1 Timothy 2:12-13)

The eleven disciples were later apostles. We also remember the scripture, *"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."* (Ephesians 4:11-12) The apostle Paul told the preacher Timothy, *"And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to*

faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” 2 Timothy 2:2. From these scriptures, it should be clear that God has had a succession of preachers, teaching the whole council of God, adding nothing, and leaving nothing out. These preachers have served the New Testament church down through the ages, and they were the only ones who had the authority to baptize. See the Appendix beginning on page 232 for a brief history and the lineage of today’s “old line” Primitive Baptists.

Proper Effect

If the above four essentials of baptism have been met, the Lord will add the individual baptized into His church. It is only God who decides this, as follows: *“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* (Acts 2:47) Also, *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.”* (1 Corinthians 12:13) The New Testament church has existed down through the ages, since it was first established by Jesus Christ. To prove this point, consider the following: *“And Jesus answered and said unto him, blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock (or foundation of direct revelation by the Father as is also stated in Hebrews 8:10-11) I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* (Matthew 16:17-18) I do not believe it is possible for the “gates of hell” to have ever prevailed against the Lord’s church. Therefore, there has been a continuous and unbroken succession of churches for about 2,000 years in which preachers have taught the “whole council of God.” As noted above, the Primitive Baptists trace their lineage through the Welsh Baptists who date from the first century. See the Appendix beginning on page 232. Remember that

it is only God who adds to His church. Therefore, we should follow scripture as closely as possible so that, hopefully, God will add us to His church. Church membership for an obedient child of God offers fellowship with Jesus Christ (as Revelation 3:20) through the Holy Spirit. It is a little bit of heaven (our inheritance) while we are still on earth. One should not take church membership lightly.

Scriptural Example

To see an example in scripture where not all of the four essentials were met, refer to Acts 19:1-6. In this case, the disciples under consideration received the correct mode (#1) of baptism, and as believers (called disciples) they were proper subjects (#2); however, the object (#3) of the baptism was wrong, as well as the administrator (#4). Apollos, who we believe baptized the disciples under consideration, was not an ordained preacher at the time he baptized these individuals. John the Baptist had baptized Apollos, so Apollos was properly baptized, but only John had authority to give the “baptism of repentance” (Matthew 3:11, Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:7-8). Because of this, these disciples did not receive the “proper effect,” as given above. In this case, after questioning by the apostle Paul, these believers were baptized. Notice it does not say they were rebaptized, since apparently God considered that they had never been baptized in the first place. Consider the following: *“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coast came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples (right subject as #2 above), he said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye*

baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism (wrong object at this time, as #3 above, but correct mode as #1 above). Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Acts 19:1-6

Concluding Remarks

During about the first forty years after Christ established the church, members received "sign gifts," and the apostles worked miracles ("*And God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul.*" Acts 19:11) which God used to prove and signify establishment of the church as prophesied by the prophet Joel, Acts 2:16-21. Because of this, the "proper effect" was easy to observe in that day. If God had added someone to His church (as Acts 2:47), they would possess the sign gifts.

Today, it is not so easy to tell if God has added us to His true church. We know God blesses his children who are obedient to God's Word, based on their understanding. For this reason, we must study the Bible and assure ourselves we have a proper baptism. Even if we have been sprinkled or immersed in water by one or more church denominations, if we ever doubt that even one of the above four essentials has not been properly met, then the person should submit to baptism.

For the reasons given above, the "old line" Primitive Baptist Church does not accept the baptism of any denomination

when receiving new members. This policy is consistent with scripture, and should be followed by any church, which is attempting to closely follow scripture since one or more of the above four essentials of baptism would be different for each religious order. Further, the church is referred to as the bride of Christ, as follows: John the Baptist said, *“Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride, is the bridegroom: etc.”* (John 3:28-29) Also, notice the following: *“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...”* (Ephesians 5:25-26) The 32nd verse says, *“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”* The bride is joined to the bridegroom in a marriage ceremony. For the church, this ceremony is called baptism. The bride (church member) is being joined to Christ in the church.

If a wife loses her husband in death and the wife remarries, it would be expected that another marriage ceremony should be performed. She would not tell the man she was hoping to marry; “I have been through one wedding ceremony, so we can forget this formality.” If she said this, he would forget her. For the same reason, the church member is viewing his old denomination as dead and wants to be joined to another; therefore, the “marriage ceremony,” or baptism, is necessary.

If the above four essentials of baptism are met, but for some reason the church where the baptism was performed is not in fellowship, then for the peace of the church, the person should submit to baptism. Acts 16:1-5 gives an excellent example. It is well known that circumcision is an

Old Testament practice that was required under Jewish Law, but is not required by the New Testament for church membership, or for a man to be ordained an elder. Even so, notice how Paul handled Timothy in this situation, *“...and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.”* (Acts 16:3-5) The peace of the church should be put first above any personal issues, even when technically it should not be necessary. Another baptism is not as painful as that experienced by Timothy, in which he allowed himself to be circumcised so as not to offend any of the Jews in the church.

There is another good example in which the apostle Paul puts the peace of the church ahead of his pride or his individual preference. In this case, Paul humbly submitted himself to some inconveniences in order to appease the Jews who felt he was preaching that one should forsake Moses and Jewish customs. Refer to Acts 21:21-26. These verses begin as follows: *“And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. What is it therefore? The multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them; Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.”* (Acts 21:21-24)

Then, two verses later, we see the action Paul took in order to maintain peace in the church, which states as follows: *“Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.”* (Acts 21:26) Paul put church peace first.

Conclusion

If there is any doubt about a proper baptism or any issue affecting church peace, then one should be baptized. In the latter case, the baptism could be looked at as a rededication of vows.

The apostle Paul put it well when he said to the Romans, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1) After all, it is not unreasonable for the child of God to follow the above four essentials as given in scripture. They should repent of their sins (Acts 3:19), confess Christ (Romans 10:9), and be baptized (Mark 16:16).

Chapter XIV Faith

The Bible has much to say about faith...God's faith...our faith...and something as to what our faith indicates. In one place we learn that our faith is an evidence:

- *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* (Hebrews 11:1)

...but an evidence of what?...something hoped for?

Man's faith versus God's faith

There are three excellent verses that show our faith...or our belief in Christ...is an evidence and a proof we are "born of God."

- *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."* (1 John 5:1)
- *"...and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* (Acts 13:48)
- Jesus said, *"...verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."* (John 5:24)

If we hear, and if we believe that Jesus is the Christ, we are already born of God. Our belief in Christ is not something we must do to become "born again"...it is an evidence that we have already passed from death to life.

The dead can do nothing for themselves. There is no such thing as dead, deader, and deadest. The dead are simply dead. Only God can give life.

- *“And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.”* (Ephesians 2:1)

Our faith is the result of our being born again...it is an evidence...and it is totally of God.

- *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.”* (Hebrews 12:2)

God is the author...He wrote our names in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 3:5 & 13:8), *“...before the foundation of the world.”* (Ephesians 1:4) God is the finisher of our faith. The death of Jesus on the cross paid the sin debt...*“It is finished.”* (John 19:30) Apparently, that leaves us out of the process. Our faith is simply a “fruit”...an outgrowth...of the Spirit.

- *“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* (Galatians 5:22-23)

First comes the spirit of God in the spiritual birth...then comes the fruit of the spirit. The seventh fruit listed is our faith. Until this point we could not exercise our faith, which we do not have, so as to believe that Jesus is the Christ. God's work in our spiritual birth is first...then we believe...or rather, we have the ability to believe...we have an *“ear to hear,”* (Revelation 3:22 and many other verses). In addition to the above, consider the following:

- *“Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”* (John 6:29)

Our belief in Christ is a work of God. When we exercise our God given faith, it is also called a work...as follows:

- *“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, etc.”* (I Thessalonians 1:3)

“...and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.” (II Thessalonians 1:11)

Therefore, we learn that our faith is a work...you could even say it is a righteous work. Even so, our faith...which is an evidence (Hebrews 11:1)... does not save us eternally...God alone has done this.

- *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”* (Titus 3:5)

Why does sinful man want to share in God’s glory in eternal salvation, when God saved us at a time when we were yet enemies?!

- *“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”* (Romans 5:10)

Physical birth is a miracle in which the newborn babe does nothing to assist his parents or God. The spiritual birth in regeneration...eternal life...is even more of a miracle

performed by God alone...surely without our assistance, or we would be able to boast or brag.

- *“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The source of our belief is...*“his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.”* (Ephesians 1:19) Our belief in Jesus Christ...or our faith...is a work of God. (John 6:29, quoted above) It is a fruit of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) The grace through faith in Ephesians 2:8 must be God’s faith (faithfulness or fidelity in keeping the terms of the everlasting covenant-Ephesians 1:4-6)...since eternal salvation is under consideration. To see clearly God’s eternal saving faith:

- *“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”* (Philippians 3:9)
- *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”* (Romans 3:22-25)

In a letter from Elder Harold Hunt, Maryville, Tennessee, he gave a number of reasons why it is possible for God, an infinite being, to have faith. Following are some of the points he made:

- W. E. Vine and J. H. Thayer are, perhaps, the two most respected authorities with regard to the Greek language. W. E. Vine defines faith as, “firm persuasion, a conviction, trust, etc.” Thayer defines faith as, “conviction, belief, trust, confidence...” Neither of them finds the principle of limitation in the word itself. God the Father has faith in His Son; he trusts His Son; He has confidence in His Son. And God the Son has faith in His Father. When the Father sent His Son into the world, He had confidence in His Son that He would do the work that was appointed Him. When the Son lay down in death, He had confidence in His Father that He would raise Him from the dead, and that He would accept His sacrificial death as a full payment of the sin debt of His people.

What if some (God’s children) choose not to believe?

It is God’s faith (faithfulness or fidelity in keeping the terms of the everlasting covenant--Ephesians 1:4-6) that saves us eternally. Some of God’s children that could believe...reject the gospel in unbelief (Romans 3:3-4). Does this mean they will be eternally lost? God forbid! Consider the following:

- *“For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar...”* (Romans 3:3-4)

The rejection of the gospel by His rebellious born again children will not change their eternal destiny for heaven. But in this life, their unbelief will separate them from the fellowship of God, and until they repent of this sin, they are in danger of losing the blessings of God in this life, through the answer of prayers. In other words, if we deny Him, He will deny us...and not hear our prayers, as follows:

- *“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: If we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”* (II Timothy 2:10-13)

Notice in the last verse...God *“abideth faithful.”* This is saving faith. God is faithful even if we are not. This is the eternal saving faith (faithfulness or fidelity) mentioned in Ephesians 2:8 and in Philippians 3:9. God’s faith saves us eternally. Also, if you read II Timothy 2:10 closely, the Apostle Paul says he endures all things for the Elect’s sake (the elect are God’s children chosen before the foundation of the world, as given in Ephesians 1:4), that they might also obtain the salvation in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Paul says there is a salvation in Christ Jesus that is in addition to eternal glory. These blessings in this life could be called time “salvation”...we enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit. Everyone wants to be happy. For God’s children, this is only possible if we confess to Him our sins, ask God for forgiveness, and obey His Word...the Bible. We should heed the advice given in Jude, as follows:

- *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write*

unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3)

We should contend for the faith, if we are to enjoy the common salvation available to God’s children (who have heard the gospel) while in this life. The Apostle Paul feared that his “flesh nature” may cause him to lose this time “salvation” in this life...and be cast from the presence of God...to lose the comfort of the Holy Spirit by becoming a castaway, as follows:

- *“But I must keep under my body and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” (I Corinthians 9:27)*

If we do not keep under our body and bring it into subjection...a verse in Corinthians reminds us what may happen as part of being a castaway, as follows:

- *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (Corinthians I 3:16-17)*

God’s people that rebel in unbelief will suffer chastisement that may include losing their physical life; but they will still be in heaven as with the incestuous brother in I Corinthians 5:1-5. The fifth verse says as follows:

- *“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (I Corinthians 5:5)*

God is Sovereign

It is totally through the work of God (John 6:29) that His elect children are saved for heaven. It is the will of God...not the will of man. Consider the following:

- *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*
(John 1:12-13)

The above verse does not say as many as “will receive” him, but rather, as many as “have received” him. Also, it does not say as many as “will believe” on his name, but to them that are “now believing.” Notice it is only God’s will that affects eternal salvation!

People that are not born again have a carnal mind that is at “enmity against God”...they cannot hear, understand or believe things of God, as follows:

- *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.”* (Romans 8:7)
- Jesus said, *“Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do.”*
(John 8:43-44) It is clear that Jesus is speaking to people who are not born again. Jesus continues speaking to these unregenerate people as follows:
“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” (John 8:46-47) Jesus says

they do not have the ability to hear. It is not a matter of their decision.

- *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* (I Corinthians 2:14)
- *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”* (John 10:26)

If a person is not born again, they cannot hear, understand or believe...so what good is preaching to these individuals? The Apostle Paul apparently agrees with this statement; he wanted to avoid those that *“believe not”* (John 10:26), who are unreasonable and wicked men, as follows:

- *“Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you. And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith.”* (II Thessalonians 3:1-2)
- *“That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; etc.”* (Romans 15:31) These must be those who *“believe not,”* as given in John 10:26.

Why would Paul not want to preach to unbelievers? Today, some people tell us that this is the purpose of preaching the gospel...so the unregenerate unbeliever can be saved eternally. But we remember that those not born again can neither hear, understand nor believe. Paul answers this as follows:

- *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (I Corinthians 1:18)*

If this verse is true, then preaching the gospel must only be for those who are born again--the ones already saved eternally, so that they may be “saved” in this life. Consider the following:

- *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (I Corinthians 1:21)*

Since “them that believe” are already born again as I John 5:1, Acts 13:48 and John 5:24, given above...then preaching saves them that are already eternally saved. Preaching saves the saved! This is the same as noted above where Paul says that he endures all things for the elect’s sakes...*“that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”* (II Timothy 2:10) There is a salvation in Christ Jesus that is in addition to eternal salvation (heaven)...preaching saves the eternally saved for a salvation in Christ Jesus in this life. It saves us from physical suffering and sometimes death, as in Jude 5. If we are obedient unto baptism, the gospel saves us from this wicked, *“untoward generation,”* as in Acts 2:40. It saves us to be in fellowship with God...with the result that we are able to enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

Hundreds of years before Christ, the prophet Jeremiah prophesied (Jeremiah 31:31-34) that the day was coming when God would make a new covenant with His people in which He would put His laws directly into their hearts.

- ...*“I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will remember their sin no more.”* (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

Almost the exact words were repeated in the book of Hebrews 8:8-13 in which this prophecy is declared fulfilled. The old Levitical priesthood was over, and Jesus Christ had ushered in a new priesthood...Hebrews chapters 7-10. Notice above...the Bible says it will no longer be taught that we must...*“Know the Lord.”* (Hebrews 8:11) Isn't the opposite of this taught today even though many well meaning, sincere people hold this position? Today, we are told by some that we must *“Know the Lord”* in order to be eternally saved. God disagrees!

Spiritual Birth

If our eternal salvation is totally dependant on the will of God...if He is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2), when did God decide to save those that He did save? Consider the following:

- *“According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”* (Ephesians 1:4-6)

This verse says that God elected for heaven those whom He did choose before the foundation of the world...before we were born, before Adam and Eve were ever created. It also says that He made us accepted with God...we do not accept Christ as our personal saviour to become born again. Those who are born again confess Christ as in Romans 10:9, for a salvation in this life in fellowship with Christ...to enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit.

In order to be born again and pass from death to life, as given in Ephesians 2:1 above, we are called to life by the Son of God. Jesus said,

- *“Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”* (John 5:25)
- *“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.”* (John 6:63)

Conclusion

God’s plan of salvation is better than any man could ever devise. God’s plan has many more people in heaven than all the Christian denominations combined. Man’s religious practice is not involved. God’s plan for eternal salvation omits man...God gets the job done. God gets all the glory, and man gets no glory wherein he could boast (Ephesians 2:9)...man deserves no glory. The faith or faithfulness (fidelity) of God achieves heaven for His elect children, out of all *“nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, etc.”* (Revelation 7:9) The deliverance God planned for His children in this life for enjoyment during his lifetime is gospel conversion unto discipleship...time “salvation.”

Chapter XV Justification

This chapter on Justification is copied from my book *Resolving Bible Dilemmas* since it provides additional doctrinal structure to assist the reader in seeing how Bible verses fit together rather than oppose each other. This principle is important if one is to become “...a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” 2 Timothy 2:15

Justification is a legal term, so if it is to be “rightly divided,” one must first determine the jurisdiction of the court being considered. The premise is a Supreme Court exists in heaven to settle eternal matters. This court is involved with the work of Christ on the cross for the elect of God, which results in regeneration and eternal salvation for the elect.

Further, two lower courts exist in earth to determine the “born again” sinner’s fate while alive in this present world. These lower courts are involved with judgments relating to man’s belief and obedience to God’s commandments, which leads one to conversion to discipleship in His church, and yields blessings in one’s lifetime.

The above mentioned courts must exist because of Adam’s sin. The law of God that Adam violated and the penalty to be suffered are first mentioned in Genesis 2:16-17. These verses state, “*And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” The margins of many Bibles state that the Hebrew language literally means, “dying thou

shalt die.” Three types of death are involved. Adam immediately suffered death to fellowship with God. Next, he began to physically die, ending in physical death. Finally, except for the grace of God that provides eternal salvation for the elect of God, Adam would have then suffered eternal damnation (known as the second death).

Notice the sin of Adam, as clearly stated in the Roman letter, *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”* (Romans 5:12) The human race has inherited Adam’s sinful and sin prone nature. The three courts of justice, which must deal with the sin of Adam, are covered in the three sections that follow.

Justification by Blood

1) The “Divine Court,” or Supreme Court in heaven, is the court that operates under the law of sin and death. Jesus, the Surety, paid what the law demanded, as follows: *“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”* (Romans 4:25) Jesus paid the price for every elect child of God. The elect are as follows: *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”* (Ephesians 1:4) Also, we remember, *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”* (Hebrews 9:22) Our justification is through Jesus’ blood (His death on the cross) as follows: *“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”* (Romans 5:9) Also, this same message is repeated in Ephesians, *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace.”* (Ephesians 1:7) This

justification relates to eternal salvation, and only involves heaven for God's elect people, noted above in Ephesians 1:4.

Justification by Faith

2) This court is the "court of one's conscience," and it is an earthly court that involves conditional time "salvation." When God gives spiritual life (John 3:8 & 6:63) to His elect children (Ephesians 1:4-7), He puts His laws in their mind and heart as follows: "...saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." (Hebrews 8:10) As a result of this work of God, they become aware of their sins and their consciences condemn them (Romans 2:15). The children of God feel a deep sense of guilt. They "*labor and are heavy laden*" as Matthew 11:28 states, since their consciences condemn them as being guilty of God's laws. They feel that, unless a remedy is found, they have no hope in this life or after death.

Along with receiving the law of God "*into their mind*" (Hebrews 8:10), they also receive nine manner of fruit called "*fruit of the Spirit*" as listed in Galatians 5:22-23. The seventh fruit listed is faith. When a born again child of God hears the gospel message, obeys its commands, and trusts by faith that a sovereign God alone and unaided has saved him eternally, he then will feel secure. Justification by faith satisfies the conscience and offers peace of mind in this life. Galatians 2:16 states, "*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ* (Philippians 3:9 for justification by blood), *even we have* (in obedience) *believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified* (in our own minds) *by the faith of* (which we received from) *Christ* (as a fruit of the

Spirit...Galatians 5:22-23), *and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*"

Also, consider a similar statement in Romans 5:1-5, (the first verse refers back to the preceding verse 4:25, "*Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.*"), as follows: "*Therefore being justified by faith (the faith of Christ--not our faith--and His faithfulness in keeping the terms of the everlasting covenant), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (justification by blood): By whom also we have access by faith (the sinner's faith) into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*" Justification by faith (the sinner's faith) is often called "time salvation," because the benefits and penalties are experienced by God's people only in this life.

Justification by Works

3) This is the "court of our acquaintances." Like the "court of one's conscience," the "court of our acquaintances" is also an earthly court. This court deals with how God's people conduct themselves in this life as a witness for Christ. It deals with how God's people are "judged" by others who observe their conduct as a witness for Christ. God expects His children to "bare fruit" by obeying His laws during their lifetime; therefore, God holds them accountable through chastisement when they fail (Hebrews 10:26-31). If their light shines before men in such a way that observers are forced to conclude that these individuals are children of the Heavenly King, then one could say that

they have been justified by works. The book of James clearly explains this principle. James 2:14-26 uses Abraham as an excellent example and explains that faith without good works is dead (James 2:17, 20, and 26). James also states, *“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”* (James 2:24) Justification by works could also be called “time salvation,” since God’s people only experience its benefits or penalties in this lifetime. Notice that good works and the exercising of our faith are necessary for salvation in time (in this present world), through the lower earthly courts. If the above verse from James concerned eternal salvation, then it would contradict Titus 3:5, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he has saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”*

Comments on the three courts

Notice that, unlike the other two earthly courts, the child of God is totally and completely passive in the Divine Court. Nothing in this life can alter the outcome or actions by the Divine Court. There is no paradox in salvation. However, God’s born again children are active in the other two lower courts, and must be obedient to God’s commands and laws if they are to be justified by faith and justified by works. Notice as follows: *“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:31-32) The benefits and blessings a child of God obtains by obedience can be enjoyed or lost in this lifetime by disobedience and sinful acts. This fact is clearly stated in Hebrews 10:26-31 which begins, *“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more*

sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation”...

God holds his children accountable for their actions, or lack of action, in this life. If in doubt, read Hebrews 12:5-11, which begins, *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth”...*

The child of God does have trouble in this life as Paul made clear in Romans, as follows: *“For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”* (Romans 7:15-17) God’s children have two different natures, one is carnal and the other is spiritual.

Declare to be just

There is another use of the word justify that may surprise some Bible believers. Elder Sonny Pyles preached on Justification at a meeting in the fall of 2001. He pointed out that this term does not always mean a change for the better or a spiritual improvement. God pronounced a woe against some individuals who justified certain things, as follows: Isaiah 5:20, 23 *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ...Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!”* To justify the wicked (to declare them just) is a justification that God condemns. It is not for the better. Also consider this verse:

“And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.” (Luke 7:29-30) These people that heard Him could not make God more just than He already was. Justify in these verses mean “declare to be just.” Those who were obedient unto baptism were by their actions declaring God’s commands as being just. As with other words in the Bible, justification has several different meanings.

Proof that God has faith

For one who believes in cause and effect, God is the first cause in both creation and salvation. A born again person has been given nine manner of fruit, as listed in Galatians, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* (Galatians 5:22-23) Man’s faith is the seventh fruit listed. God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, possesses these same nine fruits, but to an infinite degree. God’s faith, or belief in Himself and belief in all decrees by the Holy Trinity, is faith to an infinite degree.

If eternal salvation is by the faith of Christ and God’s faith, then one might say there is a problem with this doctrine since the word “faith” may imply imperfect knowledge. God’s knowledge is perfect (Isaiah 46:10), so this position may at first only appear to be inconsistent with the doctrine of omniscience.

In a letter from Elder Harold Hunt, Maryville, Tennessee, he gave a number of reasons why it is possible for God, an infinite being, to have faith. Following are some of the points he made:

- “W. E. Vine and J. H. Thayer are, perhaps, the two most respected authorities with regard to the Greek language. W. E. Vine defines faith as: “firm persuasion, a conviction, trust, etc.” Thayer defines faith as, “conviction, belief, trust, confidence....” Neither of them finds the principle of limitation in the word itself. God the Father has faith in His Son; he trusts His Son; He has confidence in His Son. And God the Son has faith in His Father. When the Father sent His Son into the world, He had confidence in His Son that He would do the work that was appointed Him. When the Son laid down in death, He had confidence in His Father that He would raise Him from the dead, and that He would accept His sacrificial death as a full payment of the sin debt of His people.”

Several verses clearly state we are saved eternally by the faith (or work) of Christ, or by God’s faith in His blood (or His certain belief that Christ would submit to death on the cross), which are as follows:

- *“And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”* (Philippians 3:9)
- *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”* (Romans 3:22-25)

- *“For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar;”* (Romans 3:3-4)
- *“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* (1 Peter 1:5) This faith must be God’s infinite faith (or certain belief in the work of Christ and that He would preserve His children blameless until the end), since eternal salvation is kept by God until *“...the last time.”* This verse refers to the faith of God, or faithfulness of God.

Man’s faith compared to faith of Christ and the faith of God

We should compare man’s faith to the faith of Jesus Christ (in His humanity as son of Mary). Man’s faith is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) as defined by Hebrews 11:1 which states, *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* Jesus stated many times, *“O ye of little faith”* as in Matthew 16:8 and Luke 12:28. Man has only a little faith, and many times, the born again man rejects this faith in acts of rebellion, as stated in Romans 3:3 and 2 Timothy, *“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”* (2 Timothy 2:13)

The following are good examples of many born again people who lost their physical life (not eternal life) by rebelling against God through sinful acts called “unbelief” (man chooses to reject their God given faith):

- *“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.”* (Jude 5) God would not destroy

the unregenerate for unbelief because they believe not because they are not one of His sheep (as John 10:26 states). The unbelief of the unregenerate is the result of God's choice because God did not elect them from before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). Now compare this verse with 1 Corinthians 10:1-5 and John 6:54 as follows: *"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."* (1 Corinthians 10:1-5) To prove all were children of God, compare the wording above to John 6:53-54: *"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."* The above verses prove that all the Jews who Moses led out of Egypt were born again. Even so, many were *"overthrown in the wilderness"* for the sin of unbelief. This particular event referred to in Jude 5 is also referred to in Hebrews 3:7-19. Our faith can fail to such an extent that it costs us our physical life, but not eternal life, as stated in Romans 3:3 and 2 Timothy 2:13.

On the other hand, Jesus in His humanity (as the son of Mary) had great faith. Jesus in His divine nature is God; therefore as God, He has infinite faith...or certain and infinite belief in Himself and all His decrees.

Let's consider Jesus Christ as completely man as well as God manifest in flesh as given by John 1:1-4, 14. In His humanity (son of Mary-Mary's egg was fertilized by God through the Holy Spirit as in Matthew 1:20), Jesus has a sin-free nature, and a sin-free mortal mind similar to Adam before the fall. The spiritual mind of Jesus Christ is God.

In contrast to Jesus, a born again person has a sinful carnal mind, which is at "*enmity against God*" (Romans 8:7) and is prone to sin (Romans 7:14-25). This born again person also has a pure spiritual mind (2 Peter 3:1) which cannot sin, as clearly stated, "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*" (1 John 3:9)

Jesus in His humanity, as the son of Mary, "*increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man.*" (Luke 2:52) God's wisdom cannot increase, since it is infinite. Jesus in His humanity could grow in wisdom, as He grew from childhood as the son of Mary, and He could be tempted as in Luke 4:1-13. Also, He prayed to God the Father, as in John 17:1-26. (There are many other references of Jesus praying to the Father.) Jesus, in His humanity (as the son of Mary) had great faith or belief in God by offering Himself to die on the cross (Romans 4:25) in order to pay the price acceptable to God, and thereby save all of the elect of God eternally. Jesus (the son of Mary) knew He would suffer alone, separated from the presence of God...separated from His Divine spiritual mind. Matthew 27:45-46 notes that darkness was over all the land from the sixth to the ninth hour, then finishes by saying about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Jesus, (as the son of Mary, the second Adam) was suffering the wrath of God all alone.

Human brain compared to a computer

In considering the possibility of a person having two natures, or two minds, refer to Bible examples of people who are indwelled by unclean spirits. Our fleshly brain is like computer hardware that can be loaded with more than one software program. Remember the Gadarene man who lived in the tombs? (Mark 5:1-19) This Gadarene man was indwelled by many unclean spirits. When Jesus asked the man his name, the unclean spirits said, *“My name is Legion: for we are many.”* (Mark 5:9) Mark 5:13 states, *“they were about two thousand.”* The software program that all humans are born with is called our carnal nature, which was inherited from Adam. God gives the born again person a pure spiritual mind (2 Peter 3:1) at the time of regeneration (Titus 3:5-7). This spiritual mind cannot sin (1 John 3:9). As with the Gadarene man mentioned above, and many others mentioned in scripture, the human mind can also be indwelled by one or more unclean spirits.

The occurrence of unclean spirits (fallen angels) indwelling human beings is a clear fact of Scripture. However, how this event occurs is less clear. We do know that, regarding the Holy Spirit, Christ is knocking on the “door” of the heart of born again people. This fact is clearly stated to the Laodicean church, beginning at Revelation 3:14, and extending to the end of the chapter. Notice as follows: *“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* (Revelation 3:19-22) Christ is addressing

the “lukewarm” (Rev. 3:16) regenerate church members, asking to be invited into their hearts. If this case applies with the Holy Spirit, surely it must also apply with unclean spirits. Unclean spirits would not be able to enter uninvited into the human mind. It is possible that Satanist and secret society rituals, as well as religions which worship false Christ's, are the means of this invitation. To understand this last possibility, consider the following: *“For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.”* (2 Corinthians 11:4) The worship of a false Christ, or anti-Christ, may be very dangerous. The Christ we worship is defined by the doctrine we believe. Therefore, Bible doctrine is extremely important.

Justification in the Divine Court

Our legal justification before God by Jesus Christ (yielding eternal salvation for the elect of God) is clearly stated, *“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”* (Romans 4:25) This justification was effected by the infinite faith, or certain belief by God, that Jesus in his humanity (as the son of Mary, as the second Adam), would submit to death on the cross. Jesus, in His humanity (as the son of Mary), could have refused (in theory), or He would have had no humanity.

Further, because of His great faith, (not infinite faith or belief), Jesus Christ (as the son of Mary) believed that at His death His soul would go immediately to God. Also, Jesus (the son of Mary), had great faith (not infinite faith or He would not have had a human nature) that God would raise Him again from the dead three days after His death

on the cross, to accomplish legal justification--Romans 4:25.

God had *"faith in His blood,"* (Romans 3:25) which meant that Jesus had to die as further stated *"without shedding of blood is no remission."* (Hebrews 9:22) In Christ's death on the cross, God had faith (infinite faith and certain belief) that Jesus, the man (the son of Mary), would submit to death. We know that Jesus, the son of Mary, prayed as follows: *"Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."* (Luke 22:42 see also Matthew 26:39, 42 and Mark 14:36) Jesus, the man, desperately wanted to avoid separation from the presence and fellowship of God. While Christ was still alive, hanging on the cross, God's hatred and wrath was poured out on Him (because He was bearing our sins, even though He was Himself without sin). Jesus, the man, at the ninth hour (it was dark over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth), cried out, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"* (Matthew 27:46) Jesus, the man (the son of Mary), was alone and separated from God, suffering the wrath of God for God's elect children.

Conclusion

Thus, we see justification in three courts. We see the amazing grace of God in saving His chosen people without the eternal loss of even one. Our religious practice is not involved here. However, God has preserved the gospel and His church so as to offer a "salvation" for His children in this life (based on their obedience) from this untoward, unruly and wicked generation (Acts 2:38-40). We call this conditional time "salvation." One can only say, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!"

Chapter XVI John 3:16

The purpose of this chapter is to consider this important Bible verse which is so well known, but is so completely misunderstood. We will consider John 3:14-18. These verses as they appear in the King James AV 1611 Bible are as follows:

- John 3:14 *“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:”*
- John 3:15 *“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*
- John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*
- John 3:17 *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”*
- John 3:18 *“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”*

Note: The words above that are underlined, world and believeth, are for emphasis.

The following consideration will primarily provide Bible based definitions for the words “world” and “believeth,” and will show which “world” obviously is under consideration in

John 3:16. However, the expression “*whosoever believeth*” may not seem so straightforward at first. Even so, in light of the actual grammar, as well as the way in which the Bible uses “believeth” in a number of Bible verses, the meaning of this phrase will become clear.

World

Let’s first consider “world.” One must know which “world” is the object of God’s love. We know that in the in the 9th verse of the 17th chapter of John, Jesus prayed just before He was crucified: “*I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*” This prayer clearly demonstrates that a world exists that God does not love. In fact, in the 17th chapter of John, “world” is mentioned 19 times, and refers to at least four different “worlds.” (as shown later, beginning on page 202) One should verify this fact for himself.

Further, consider the “world” mentioned in Luke 2:1. This verse states as follows: “*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.*” Does this verse refer to the whole human world? Of course not! However, many people make the same mistake regarding John 3:16. Obviously, Luke 2:1 refers to the Roman world. In light of John 17:9, John 3:16 clearly refers to the “elect world” which God chose before the foundation of the world. Ephesians 1:4 states: “*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*” The elect world is the object of God’s love in John 3:16.

Now, let’s look closer at the “elect.” Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:2, “*Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the*

Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” “Foreknowledge” is also mentioned by Paul in Romans 8:29, “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” Foreknowledge means God “knew” the elect before the world was created. God “knew” them in the same way a man “knows” his wife. God has an intimate love that He has had for His elect since before the foundation of the world, as in Ephesians 1:4.

Now, notice another comment by Jesus. In Matthew 7:22-23, Jesus states: “*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” Jesus being God manifest in the flesh knew about these people. Jesus obviously means He never knew these people intimately. They were never the objects of His love (foreknowledge) from before the foundation of the world. God only loves the “elect world.”

Believeth

Next, the phrases “*whosoever believeth in him,*” “*believeth on him,*” as well as “*believeth not*” will now be considered. The main point to remember is that one’s belief that Jesus is the Christ cannot be both the cause as well as the effect of eternal life. In the real world, we always consider if something is the cause of a problem (or occurrence), or if it is just the effect, symptom, or evidence that points us back to the problem.

Cause and effect has already been covered in detail in Chapters II and V. Even so, for a real world example of cause and effect, imagine that an electric lamp does not work. The fact that the lamp does not work is the symptom, or effect, that points you back to the cause of the problem. The cause may be a burned out light bulb, faulty wiring, a circuit breaker, etc. You could not say that the lack of light is the cause of the problem. Elder Sonny Pyles preached an excellent sermon titled *Three Essential Facts* in which the principle of cause and effect as concerns Bible doctrine is explained much better than I ever could. Section II beginning on page 61 includes four chapters that are based on this sermon preached by Elder Sonny Pyles.

“Believeth” (as “*whosoever believeth*”), based on the actual grammar, is interpreted “whosoever is in the state of believing.” Our belief is always given in the Bible as an evidence, or effect that has resulted from one being already born again (1 John 5:1, John 5:24, Acts 13:48, John 10:26, Galatians 5:22-23, etc.). Notice the reading of the above mentioned verses:

- 1 John 5:1 “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*”
- John 5:24 “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word (John 8:47), and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*”
- Acts 13:48 “*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*”

- John 10:26 *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”* (Jesus did not say if you will believe, you will become one of God’s sheep. He said the opposite.)
- Galatians 5:22-23 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*

The following is a review from previous chapters on being born again, (as stated by Jesus in John 3:3 *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,”*). The 8th verse of John 3 states *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* No man can control where or when the wind will blow (which is the reason that Jesus gave us this example), or, similarly, where or when the Holy Spirit will act in giving spiritual life. In John 6:63, Jesus states: *“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”*

Jesus also states in John 5:25: *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”* This verse refers to the actual voice of Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, as when Jesus called Lazarus from the grave in John 11:43. The words from Jesus, as repeated by man, do not lead one to become born again, rather, the voice of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit accomplishes this purpose. Man is not involved in this action in any way, since the unregenerate man is spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) and hates God (Romans 8:7). Ephesians 2:1 states:

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” The dead can do nothing for themselves. Only God can give spiritual life.

Another verse that shows God’s sovereignty in eternal salvation is John 6:44: *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”* This principle is repeated by Jesus in John 6:65: *“And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.”* Jesus is the way, as: *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* Those chosen by the Father (Ephesians 1:4) are given (not offered) eternal life by Jesus, as stated in John 17:2-3: *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”* Notice the limitation (to whom Jesus will give eternal life) strongly expressed by Jesus in praying for *“as many as,”* which means not one more and not one less. Only those God the Father gave Jesus will be given eternal life, as in John 6:37-39: *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”*

As stated before, belief in Christ is the evidence of spiritual life. Many people today say that belief in Christ is the cause of spiritual life. Something cannot be both the cause as well as the effect of an occurrence. The Bible always takes the position that belief is the effect. This faith is a

“fruit” of the Holy Spirit that dwells within them. (Galatians 5:22-23)

We will now consider the phrase *“believeth not”* in John 3:18. Refer to John 10:26, since Jesus was speaking to some unregenerate people. He stated: *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”* In other words, they do not believe because they are not a child of God. They do not believe because they are not of His sheep. Someone not born again is totally unable to believe that Jesus is the Christ. The unregenerate cannot understand spiritual things, as stated by 1 Corinthians 2:14: *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* The unregenerate cannot hear spiritual things, as Jesus stated in John 8:47: *“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”*

Purpose of the GOSPEL

Bible verses like Romans 10:13, *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,”* are not referring to eternal salvation, but rather to the aspect of salvation that is available for God’s children in this life resulting from obedience unto discipleship in the Lord’s church. This salvation is from this wicked *“untoward generation,”* as in Acts 2:40. This salvation is in addition to eternal glory, as Paul stated in 2 Timothy 2:10: *“Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”*

Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, John 3:14-18 could be rewritten so as to clearly show which world is the object of God's love. Further, a person that does believe that Jesus is the Christ is already a child of God. The phrases "*believeth in him*" or "*believeth on him*" could obviously be replaced with the phrase "a child of God." The phrase "*that believeth not,*" could be replaced with "is not a child of God," or "is not of His sheep."

John 3:14-18 could then be rewritten as follows:

- And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up on the cross of Calvary: That whosoever is a child of God should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the elect world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever is a child of God should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the elect world; but that the elect world through Him might be saved. He that is a child of God is not condemned: but he that is not a child of God is condemned already, because he is not of His sheep.

World Verses

C = Created world: H = Human world: NE= Non-Elect world: E = Elect world

John 17:5 "*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world^C was.*"

John 17:6 *"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world^H: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."*

John 17:9 *"I pray for them: I pray not for the world^{NE}, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."*

John 17:11 *"And now I am no more in the world^H, but these are in the world^H, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."*

John 17:12 *"While I was with them in the world^H, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."*

John 17:13 *"And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world^H, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."*

John 17:14 *"I have given them thy word; and the world^{NE} hath hated them, because they are not of the world^{NE}, even as I am not of the world^C."*

John 17:15 *"I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world^H, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."*

John 17:16 *"They are not of the world^H, even as I am not of the world^C."*

John 17:18 *"As thou hast sent me into the world^H, even so have I also sent them into the world^H."*

John 17:21 *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world^E may believe that thou hast sent me.”*

John 17:23 *“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world^E may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.”*

John 17:24 *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world^C.”*

John 17:25 *“O righteous Father, the world^{NE} hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.”*

Chapter XVII The Parable of the Sower

This chapter will consider the familiar parable Jesus taught concerning the parable of the sower, as given in Matthew 13:3-23. In my opinion this parable is not fully understood by many Bible believers. Based on Bible doctrine as given in previous chapters of this book, hopefully the lesson taught by the parable of the sower will now be much easier to understand. In this chapter, I will quote a number of points as suggested by Elder Harold Hunt, Maryville, TN.

In the parable of the sower, the subject is hearing and understanding the “*word of the kingdom*, (Matthew 13:19)...the preached gospel. The misunderstanding by many concerning this parable is they consider the “*seed sown in good ground*” (Matthew 13:8) to be the only example in the parable representing children of God. Arguments will be made in this chapter to hopefully prove that the seed sown “*by the wayside,*” “*into stony places,*” and “*among the thorns*” are also examples of God’s children who, after hearing the preached gospel, for various reasons, do not bear fruit. They are regenerate, but they are not obedient unto discipleship in the Lord’s church so as to “bear fruit.” They do not enjoy the great blessing in this life from gospel “salvation.” This is a salvation from “*this untoward generation,*” as Peter declared in Acts 2:40. They are still God’s people, but because of their rebellion, they may suffer chastisement in this life unless they become obedient to God’s commandments. God chastens His rebellious children as noted in Hebrews 10:26-31 and Hebrews 12:5-11.

This parable does not have to do with hearing the “*holy calling*” (2 Timothy 1:9, “*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*”) that is given by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit to the elect of God in regeneration. Jesus Himself describes this “*holy calling*” in the following Bible verses:

- John 5:25 “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.*” The dead cannot help in this process...they are dead!
- John 6:63 “*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*”

In the parable of the sower, the hearing can be hindered by stony ground, thorns, etc. The spiritual life giving “*holy calling*” by Jesus Christ, the Seed of God that produces regeneration, cannot be hindered or resisted. This incorruptible Seed of God that always produces spiritual life unto eternal salvation is described as following:

- 1 Peter 1:23 “*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*” This “*word of God*” is the second person of the Holy Trinity as given in 1 John 5:7, “*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.*” Jesus is referred to as the Seed of God in Galatians 3:16: “*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*” Physical life comes from the corruptible seed of man, while eternal

life comes from the incorruptible Seed of God, Jesus Christ.

Concerning how one is born again, Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:8, *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* Jesus compares regeneration to the wind which blows where it listeth...wherever it pleases. Stony ground, thorns, etc. have no effect regarding regeneration. However, there are many things that can prevent the gospel from bearing fruit.

In the parable of the sower, all four examples *“received seed.”* The unregenerate *“natural man”* cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God according to 1 Corinthians 2:14, *“for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* As Elder Harold Hunt has said, the key to understanding the text is in making a distinction between that *fruit* that comes from being born again, and the *fruit* that comes from hearing, understanding, and obedience to the preached gospel. For gospel fruit, consider the following:

- Colossians 1:5-6 *“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel: Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:”*

The preached gospel does not always bear fruit in the lives of its hearers. Some truly born again people reject the truth of the gospel, and so do not bear gospel fruit. In contrast to this, the Spirit of God dwelling within a born again person (1 Corinthians 3:16: *“Know ye not that ye are the temple of*

God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”) always bears fruit...whether one ever hears the preached gospel or not. In some it bears much fruit, and in others it bears less fruit; however, the Spirit of God in a born again person's heart always bears fruit, as described in the following Bible verses:

- Galatians 5:22-23 *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*

The above fruit from the Spirit of God that is most clearly recognized is compassion for our fellow man. That is the one identifying mark of the children of God in the final judgment as described in Matthew 25:31-46. In the final judgment what the Lord says to those on His right hand He says to all His children. A person may reject the truth of the gospel, but if he manifests no compassion for his fellow man, there is no reason to believe he is a child of God.

With the above principles in mind, and the foundation of the Bible doctrine established in previous chapters, we can now begin our study.

The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:3-23)

The “parable of the sower” teaches us some interesting principles about how God's children receive the gospel message. After giving us the parable in Matthew 13:3-8, Jesus then in the 11th verse answers His disciples' question as to why He spoke in parables: *“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”* Jesus is rebuking God's children within the nation of Israel who have drifted away from God and His laws, as had happened many other times in their history.

This could also happen to us today, and I believe it actually has. Even though Jesus has explained the parable, many today have misunderstood the true lesson being taught.

Jesus says further: *“And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear (the unregenerate cannot hear, as John 8:47), and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing (only dull, not devoid or dead), and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”*

This saying must refer to God's rebellious “born again” children who are not yet fully converted, and is similar to the case of Peter in Luke 22:31-32: *“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”* Peter was born again (as proven by Matthew 16:16-17 compared to 1 John 5:1), but had not yet been fully converted.

The unregenerate are spiritually dead. Ephesians 2:1 states: *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:”* The dead can hear nothing, so parables would be unnecessary.

Finally, Jesus explains the parable to the disciples, beginning at Matthew 13:18:

- Matthew 13:18 *“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.”*

- Matthew 13:19 *“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”*
- Matthew 13:20 *“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;”*
- Matthew 13:21 *“Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.”*
- Matthew 13:22 *“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”*
- Matthew 13:23 *“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”*

Notice that in each case, whether *“by the way side,”* *“into stony places,”* or *“among the thorns,”* Jesus always starts by saying they hear the word. Therefore, we know these individuals are children of God because of what Jesus told some who were unregenerate, as follows:

- John 8:44 *“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of*

his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.” Then a few verses later Jesus said the following:

- John 8:47 *“He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”* Jesus would not need to use parables with these people who are *“not of God.”* Jesus tells them they have no ability to hear.

Next, notice in Matthew 13:19, that the one who received seed *“by the wayside”* had the seed sown in the heart. We remember 2 Corinthians 3:3: *“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.”* The unregenerate have a heart of stone, which would make sowing seed impossible, but the fleshy heart of a born again person would be able to receive the sown seed.

Furthermore, in Matthew 13:20, the one that received the seed *“into stony places”* received it *“with joy.”* Only God’s children can receive God’s Word with joy. Joy is one of the nine fruits listed as fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. Obviously, Matthew 13:20 is also referring to a child of God.

In Matthew 13:22 the seed was received among the thorns, and this is described as one who hears the word (only a born again person can hear spiritual things...John 8:47), but the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches chokes the word so the person becomes unfruitful.

Finally, those that received the *“seed into the good ground,”* are those of God’s children who hear the Word, understand it, and bear various amounts of fruit. God

expects all of His children that are blessed to hear the gospel message to bear fruit as disciples. Even so, many are rebellious and refuse to become disciples of Christ.

Regardless, God deals with His rebellious children according to their understanding, as shown in Luke 12:47-48: *“And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”* God is merciful and patient, but He expects His children to obey His commandments and bear fruit as disciples of Christ.

Rich Young Ruler (Mark 10:17-27)

The story of the “rich young ruler” as recorded in the gospel of Mark also teaches us some interesting lessons that relate to the parable of the sower overlooked by many. These verses are as follows:

- Mark 10:17 *“And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”* (Eternal life is the subject under consideration.)
- Mark 10:18 *“And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.”*
- Mark 10:19 *“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear*

false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother.”

- Mark 10:20 *“And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.”*
- Mark 10:21 *“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”*
- Mark 10:22 *“And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.”*
- Mark 10:23 *“And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!”*
- Mark 10:24 *“And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!”*
- Mark 10:25 *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”*
- Mark 10:26 *“And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?”*
- Mark 10:27 *“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”*

First, notice that the rich young ruler wanted to know how to obtain eternal life, as he made clear in Mark 10:17. However, notice the remark by Jesus in Mark 10:25: *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”* The disciples then ask the question *“Who then can be saved?”* In Mark 10:27 we have the answer: *“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”* This verse should make it very clear that it is impossible for man to do anything to obtain eternal salvation. God is totally sovereign in eternal salvation.

Even so, another most important point is made in Mark 10:21: *“Then Jesus beholding him loved him.”* It appears that this rich young man is already a child of God. One who seeks God does so because he is already a child of God as in 1 John 4:19: *“We love Him because He first loved us.”* Christ knows the children chosen by the Father from before the foundation of the world, including the rich young ruler. If Jesus loves a person, this love goes back to before the foundation of the world...Ephesians 1:4, *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:”*...and extends on into the future into heaven itself at the end of time.

Further, we remember that Jesus has power over all flesh to save eternally any that God the Father has given Him to save. This point is clearly stated in the prayer Jesus prayed before His crucifixion in John 17:2, *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”* As many as means not one more, and not one less.

Since the rich young ruler is already a child of God, Jesus is using this account to explain the duty of a child of God, as well as the impossibility of the non-elect to obtain eternal salvation by their own efforts. The non-elect do not love God or want to know His ways. Notice how the unregenerate are referred to in Job 21:14-15: *“Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?”* The unregenerate hate God as given in Romans 8:7, *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”*

Now, let's return to the rich young ruler. Because the rich young ruler has too much trust in riches to become fruitful as a disciple of Christ, Jesus says he must first sell all that he has, give to poor, and then follow Him as a disciple. These actions are necessary if he is to be fruitful. In this parable, after the gospel seed is sown, being fruitful is the result Jesus desires.

Also, this rich young man fits the case in the parable of the sower which *“received seed among the thorns,”* as stated in Matthew 13:22. This verse states: *“He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”* He is a child of God who is unfruitful as a disciple of Christ.

The rich young ruler went away grieved in Mark 10:22. An unregenerate person would not react in this way (to go away grieved). If he was unregenerate, he would have reacted as in Acts 7:54: *“When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with*

their teeth.” The rich young ruler must have suffered later for his disobedience; however, I believe he is in heaven today. God’s laws are commandments for his children in this life. Disobedience will be punished in this life as given in Hebrews 10:26-31 and 12:5:11.

Conclusion

God commands His children to take up their cross and follow Christ, which is not just an invitation, but is a command we should gladly follow. God expects His children to bare fruit as disciples by being witnesses. To be a disciple of Christ is to enjoy the comfort of the Holy Spirit in fellowship with Jesus Christ in His church.

Our religious practice is most important. One’s “salvation” during this lifetime can then be lost sometime later if the gospel seeds have been sown “*by the wayside,*” “*into stony places,*” or “*among the thorns.*” Our disobedience to the gospel commandments are sinful acts of rebellion against God...even so, eternal salvation can never be lost. When God quickens (Ephesians 2:1 “*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;*”) the elect of God to spiritual life, this eternal life will last forever, even though the body is subject to physical suffering and physical death. Our obedience unto salvation in the Lord’s church offers us the abundant life, as described by Jesus in John 10:10, “*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*”

Section IV Foundations

This final section containing two chapters is entitled Foundations. The reason for this name is to stress that the subjects covered are actually foundational. If one is not properly grounded in these subjects, it would be like trying to build a tall building on sand rather than a properly designed and constructed foundation of reinforced concrete.

First, in Chapter XVIII entitled English Bible Translation, one must understand which English translation of the Bible is preferred and why this translation is recommend. Also included in this chapter is the method of Bible study given in the Bible.

In Chapter XIX entitled Creation versus Evolution, the final chapter of the book, it is pointed out one should understand and be fully persuaded that God created the world a few thousand years ago (no evolution over billions of years). This fact is supported by scientific evidence along with scriptural proof. One needs to realize why the issue of creation versus evolution is so very important. In fact, an argument can be made that this subject is vital to a proper understanding of Christianity.

Chapter XVIII

English Bible Translation

The question as to which Bible translation provides the most reliable representation of the original autographs that were inspired and preserved by God is complex. The argument that will be made here is to state that any version of the Bible that is not based on the Received Greek New Testament text (Textus Receptus) and the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament text should be rejected. The King James Bible Authorized Version of 1611 offers the best English translation that satisfies this requirement.

In the late nineteenth century, Westcott and Hort worked for twenty years on two ancient texts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. Using these two corrupt texts, which for centuries had been rejected, they had hopes of overthrowing the Textus Receptus and the King James Bible. The work resulted in the Westcott and Hort Greek text of 1881, followed by the English Revised Version of 1881. Modern English translations are now based on the Nestle / Aland Greek text (26th edition published about twenty years ago) that is virtually the same text as the Westcott and Hort Greek text of 1881 but with revisions. The Nestle / Aland modern Greek text now contains 2886 fewer Greek words than the Greek Textus Receptus according to "The Bible for Today Press," D. A. Waite, Th.D., Ph.D., General Editor, Collingswood, NJ.

The technique of translation from Greek to English in the King James AV 1611 New Testament was "verbal equivalence" translation as opposed to "dynamic equivalence" (or the translators paraphrase) which has been the technique for translations since 1881. Therefore,

one should expect these recent English translations based on the Nestle / Aland Greek text and a different technique of translation, to have many changes. One should want to know what God said, not what modern day scholars think God meant by what He said.

God has blessed the Greek Textus Receptus and its various translations, which included the King James AV 1611 Bible, the older Geneva Bible, and Martin Luther's German Bible. In the first century (Acts 17:6) God "turned the world upside down." During the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries He again turned the world upside down through preaching from these Bibles, based on the Greek Textus Receptus. This fact offers the best reason to select the King James AV 1611 Bible today. Modern translations are not based on this Greek text.

Bible written by God

The Bible is unlike any other book. It claims to have been written by God Himself. Much has been written which has proven beyond any reasonable doubt that God did in fact inspire men to write the Bible. Since the Bible was inspired by God Himself, it can have no errors. It must be interpreted within the sixty-six books that make up the Old and New Testaments. Interestingly, God inspired forty different men to write the sixty-six books over a period of at least fifteen hundred years, yet no contradictions or errors have ever been proven.

Dr. Henry Morris (Ph.D. Civil Engineering), Founder and President Emeritus of the Institute for Creation Research, wrote a book some years ago entitled *Many Infallible Proofs*. This excellent book explores the overwhelming evidence attesting to the literal accuracy of the Bible (other

references are available). This literal accuracy of the Bible includes the book of Genesis. Obviously Jesus considered Genesis literally accurate based on how many times He quoted from it. Further, in the first eleven chapters of Genesis we find the foundations of the Christian faith: marriage, original sin of Adam that brought death into the world and the need for Christ to redeem the elect (Romans 5:12-21), world-destroying flood of Noah, and the seven day week to name a few.

Dr. Henry Morris wrote on the verbal inspiration of the Bible in *Acts & Facts*, ICR, Vol. 28 No. 5 May 1999. He made the following observations:

- “Jesus Christ, the Word of God (John 1:1-3 and 1 John 5:7), believed in verbal inspiration. In Matthew 5:18, Jesus said, *“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”* The “jot” was the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and the “tittle” was a small mark used to distinguish between two similar shaped letters. There could hardly be anywhere a stronger statement of inspiration of the Old Testament writings, and it was made by Christ Himself.”
- “As far as the New Testament is concerned, He assured us that His own words would be accurately preserved. Jesus said, *“Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”* (Mark 13:31) In fact, the writing of all the New Testament would be accomplished through the Holy Spirit. *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...and he will shew you things to come.”* (John 16:13) *“...he shall teach you all things, and bring all*

things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26)

Method of Bible Study

In studying the Bible, we must remember the methods of Bible study taught in scripture. Some of these methods are as follows:

- *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15)*
- *“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” (2 Peter 1:20)* Private means separate or different. In other words, no contradictions exist in the Bible. All verses must mesh together and harmonize.
- *“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (1 Corinthians 2:13)*
- *“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” (Isaiah 28:10)*
- *“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” (Nehemiah 8:8)*

The Bible is reasonable, logical and consistent. Only the Bible can interpret the Bible. As noted above, all verses must harmonize.

Conclusion

One must approach Bible study on the proper foundation and with the proper structure, or doctrine, as the previous chapters have attempted to portray. Regarding the proper foundation, only the King James AV 1611 Bible is recommended. The proper method of study should be followed as given above by comparing verses throughout the Bible so as to harmonize scripture without contradictions.

Regarding proper structure or Bible doctrine, think of this as the steel girders which support a tall skyscraper. In a similar manner the proper doctrine provides a structure which supports all Bible verses in a way that harmonize scripture without contradictions.

Chapter XIX Creation versus Evolution

In studying Bible doctrine issues one will soon realize that the Bible believer must believe in the Bible account of creation (as opposed to belief in evolution) and a young earth (about six thousand years) or else one's Christian faith will begin to collapse. This belief is necessary because the first eleven chapters of Genesis contain the foundation of the Christian faith. One cannot pick some part of these opening chapters as being literally accurate and then reject other parts. If one is to believe in original sin and the need for the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross (Romans 5:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:45), he must also believe in the creation account and the flood of Noah. You cannot believe some of the Bible and throw out what you do not like.

I first heard some of the ideas expressed in this chapter from Mr. Ken Ham, Executive Director of Answers in Genesis, a creation science organization. The motto of this organization is "defending the Bible from the very first verse." The good news is that the evidence for creation fits the facts of science more directly and more logically than any evidence for evolution.

Scientific evidence for creation (rejecting evolution)

This subject will be approached first on the basis of scientific evidence, and quotations will be taken from men who are leaders in their particular field of science.

I will begin by quoting from Dr. L. Harrison Matthews (an evolutionist), in his introduction to Darwin's *The Origin of*

Species, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London, 1971, page xi. “The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory - is it then a science or a faith? Belief in the theory of evolution is thus exactly parallel to belief in special creation – both are concepts which believers know to be true but neither, up to the present, has been capable of proof.” Notice that evolution is not a proven fact of science as many think.

If evolution was a proven fact, then there would be many transitional forms of life found in the fossil record linking all forms of life (including plants, fishes, animals and humans) to earlier more simple life forms. However none exist according to the most respected evolutionary scientists.

The following statement is from a leading evolutionist, Dr. Stephen Jay Gould (recently deceased Professor of Geology and Paleontology, Harvard University), in the publication *Paleobiology*, vol. 6 (1), January 1980, page 127, “The absence of fossil evidence for intermediary stages between major transitions in organic design, indeed our inability, even in our imagination, to construct functional intermediates in many cases, has been a persistent and nagging problem for gradualistic accounts of evolution.”

The above view is also held by one of the most respected British scientist who is also an evolutionist. Dr. Colin Patterson (also recently deceased), Senior Paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History in London agrees with Dr. Stephen Jay Gould. He states, “Yet Gould and the American Museum people are hard to contradict when they say there are no transitional fossils. As a paleontologist myself, I am much occupied with the philosophical

problems of identifying ancestral forms in the fossil record....there is not one such fossil for which one could make a watertight argument.”

To quote another evolutionary scientist, David B. Kitts, Ph.D. (zoology), (School of Geology and Geophysics, Department of the History of Science, University of Oklahoma), in an article titled “Paleontology and evolutionary theory” (Evolution, vol.28, September 1974, page 467), he made the following statement: “Evolution requires intermediate forms between species and paleontology does not provide them.”

Dr. Colin Patterson, Senior Paleontologist at the British Museum of Natural History in London has made even more startling statements which support the creation argument. I will paraphrase passages from a pamphlet entitled “Impact No. 108,” produced by the Institute for Creation Research. These comments by Dr. Patterson were made in an open meeting to over fifty classification specialists and guests at the American Museum of Natural History in New York that was held November 5, 1981.

Dr. Patterson stated he had been kicking around non-evolution or even anti-evolutionary ideas for about eighteen months. As he put it, he woke up one morning after twenty years of research on evolution and realized that there was not yet one thing he knew about evolution for sure. Dr. Patterson observed that evolutionary theory is an “anti-theory” couched in the language of knowledge, but conveying none. He went on to say that the effects of the theory of common ancestry had not been merely a lack of knowledge but “positively anti-knowledge.” Patterson was saying that the most fundamental aspect of evolutionary theory, descent from common ancestry, was an “anti-

theory” that generated “anti-knowledge,” i.e. “a false interpretation of the data actually contrary to the data at hand.”

Now let’s consider what other evolutionary scientists have written on the subject “intermediate forms” linking various species to earlier more simple life forms. Regarding fish, we have the following: “The geological record has so far provided no evidence as to the origin of fishes,” as stated by J. R. Norman (Assistant Keeper, Department of Zoology, British Museum of Natural History, London), “Classification and pedigrees: fossils’ in A History of Fishes, Dr. P. H. Greenwood (editor), third edition, British Museum of Natural History, London, 1975, p. 343.

Let’s consider a publication regarding the origin of plants. “As yet we have not been able to trace the phylogenetic history of a single group of modern plants from its beginning to the present.” Chester A. Arnold (Professor of Botany and Curator of Fossil plants, University of Michigan) in An Introduction to Paleobotany, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1947, p. 7. No evolution here. The fossil record of plants is in favor of special creation.

Based on the above quotations we confirm that evolution has not been proven a scientific fact. Actually, it appears that evolution has been refuted. Regardless, both creation and evolution must be believed by faith for the simple reason that one cannot go back and repeat history to see what actually did happen. All one can do is formulate models and then use these as models for predicting and correlating data in the real world.

The facts of biology, geology, chemistry and all other sciences, in every case will correlate more directly and with

greater ease with a smaller number of problems and difficulties in the creation model than in the evolutionary model. Everything found in nature points to a creator God. This belief is based on scientific evidence found in the real world rather than blind faith in the Bible on this subject.

Bible evidence for creation (rejecting evolution)

Science is defined as what one can observe using the five senses and both test and duplicate. No human can replicate the processes in either special creation or evolution. However, we do have a witness to the event of creation. As Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis would say, “I know the one that claims to have created all things, and He told us about it in the first few books of the Bible.” By saying “*And the evening and the morning were the first day*” (Genesis 1:5), in the Hebrew language, this could only mean one literal twenty-four hour period. In this manner, God tells us how He created everything in six literal days.

God confirmed the above as six literal days at the time He established the seven day week in Exodus 20:11, when giving us the ten commandants. God said, “*For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*” A person can choose not to believe the Bible, but they cannot fail to understand that God claims to have created everything in six literal days.

An interesting consideration is that Genesis, besides giving us details concerning creation of the universe, also dates the time of creation approximately 6,000 years ago, or about 4,000 BC. In clear language, Genesis provides

information that dates the flood of Noah at 1656 years after the date of creation. A person does not have to believe this fact; however, if he does not he cannot misunderstand the clear detail given in Genesis.

Beginning with Genesis 5:3, *“And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.”* Next it states, *“And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos.”* (Genesis 5:6) Then, *“And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan.”* (Genesis 5:9) It continues in this manner through Genesis 5:29 until the birth of Noah, 1056 years after creation. Finally Genesis 7:11-12 states, *“In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventh day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the window’s of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.”*

Ten generations passed between the creation of the universe (and Adam on day six) and the great flood. The Bible only gives the age in even years (no months) for each man to beget a son. If the man in each generation averaged six months older in age than was given, then the Flood of Noah would have occurred five years later, or 1661 years after creation.

Shem, the son of Noah, who was 98 years of age at the time of the flood, lived for 502 years after the flood. The Bible dates the death of Abraham (nine generations after Shem) at 527 years after the flood. Because Abraham lived to be 175 years old, he was 150 years of age at the death of Shem which can be proven by Genesis 11:10-24. This last verse, Genesis 11:24, takes one to the birth of Terah (222 years after flood), the father of Abraham.

Genesis 11:32 states that Terah lived to be 205 years old. Acts 7:4 shows Abraham left Haran when his father Terah died (Abraham was 75 years old then, Genesis 12:4), so Terah was 130 years old when Abraham was born (352 years after the flood, or 2008 years after creation).

The reason for mentioning the above Bible facts is that most people agree that Abraham was a real person. Based on the Chronological System of Archbishop Usher, Abraham was born in the year 1996 BC, and creation occurred in the year 4004 BC. The clear details given in Genesis determine that creation by God took place about 6,000 years ago.

For added proof in the New Testament, notice the complete ancestry of Jesus tracing His lineage beginning at Luke 3:23 through Luke 3:38 to Adam. Abraham is listed in Luke 3:34 and each generation forefather is named in the same order as in Genesis where we calculated 2,008 years from the creation of Adam to the birth of Abraham. Surely no Bible believer will doubt the literal accuracy of Luke in the New Testament, so he should not doubt Genesis and the young age of the earth.

The following will be the final reason why belief in creation as detailed in the opening chapters of Genesis is absolutely essential. These thoughts also came from Ken Ham, Executive Director of Answers in Genesis. Consider the following Bible verses:

- Romans 5:12 *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”* (Read verses 12 through 21 for a more complete understanding of what is being stated.)

Notice, the above verse states death in the world originated from the sin of Adam, so billions of years of death as required by evolution is not allowed or supported by the Bible. Next, consider the following verses:

- 1 Corinthians 15:21 *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*
- 1 Corinthians 15:45 *“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”*

Notice what the above Bible verses are stating. They state that in the same way the first man Adam (by his actions alone) plunged the entire human race into death and separation from God, the second “Adam,” Jesus Christ (by His actions alone), restored many to righteousness. If man evolved from lower forms of life into a monkey which finally “evolved” into a man, then this foolishness means that no first man named Adam was created by God on day six. If the first man Adam is not important, and the original sin by Adam (that brought death into the world) is not important, then pray tell me why the second man Adam, shown above to be our Lord Jesus Christ, should be considered to be important?

Hopefully, it is now clear why those who claim to believe the Bible must also take Genesis 1-11 as literal fact. After all, this is the foundation of the Christian Faith.

Conclusion

Over the past forty plus years the Institute for Creation Research (ICR), San Diego, CA, Answers in Genesis, Florence, KY, and others, have published scientific evidence that offers more direct proof for creation by God a few thousand years ago than has ever been published to support the supposition that evolution took place over millions or billions of years. The men in these creation science organizations are Ph.D. scientists in various scientific disciplines...not theologians. Unfortunately, the excellent scientific evidence for creation that has been published does not enjoy the level of public awareness it deserves. Too many people and institutions seem to think that evolution over billions of years is a proven fact. Evolution has not been proven as a fact of science.

The Bible is very clear that “in the beginning God created all things.” Not only is the Genesis account very clear on this subject, but also John 1:1-4, 14 points out the same thing and names our Lord Jesus Christ as the creator. Belief in creation by God is much more logical and takes much less faith than belief in any form of evolution. If a person claims to be a Bible believer, he should have no problem with believing in a young earth (about six thousand years) and that all things were created by the Son of God (Hebrews 1:2).

Appendix

Brief History and Beliefs of Baptists

Brief History

The following is quoted from an excellent book by Elder Michael N. Ivey, titled *Welsh Succession of Primitive Baptist Faith and Practice*. According to Elder Ivey, present day Primitive Baptists trace their line of succession through the Kehukee Association, to the Separate Baptists in England, to the Welsh Midland Association (the enclosed 1655 Midland Confession of Faith is taken from Chapter XII), and finally to the Welsh “mother” church at Olchon. The Olchon church was located in the vale of Black Mountain on the border of Hereford, Monmouth and Brecknock counties on the Welsh / English border. This area was described as rugged and remote, which through the providence of God, contributed to the longevity and purity of doctrine practiced by Welsh Baptists. Primitive Baptist history can be traced back to the first century AD.

To quote from Elder Ivey’s above book, Chapter IV, page 47, consider the following:

- The following description of the ancient roots of the Welsh Baptists is taken from *History of the Welsh Baptists*, by Jonathan Davis, written in 1835. “*About fifty years before the birth of our Saviour, the Romans invaded the British Isles, in the reign of the Welsh king Cassebellun; but having failed, in consequence of other and more important wars made peace with them, and dwelt among them many years. During that period many of the Welsh soldiers joined the Roman army,*

and many families from Wales visited Rome; among them there was a certain woman named Claudia, who was married to a man named Pudens. At the time, Paul was sent a prisoner to Rome, and preached there in his own hired house, for the space of two years, about the year of our Lord 63. Pudens and Claudia his wife, who belonged to Caesar's household, under the blessing of God on Paul's preaching, were brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and made a profession of their Christian religion. These together with other Welshmen, among the Roman soldiers, who had heard that the Lord was gracious, exerted themselves on behalf of their countrymen in Wales, who were at the time idolaters." Davis continues, "How rapidly did the mighty gospel of Christ fly abroad! The very year 63, when Paul, a prisoner, was preaching to a few individuals, in his own hired house in Rome, the seed sowed there is growing in the Isle of Britain." The Apostle Paul concludes his second epistle to Timothy with greetings from some of the saints gathered with him in Rome. Among those mentioned are Pudens and Claudia. (See II Timothy 4:21)

Elder Ivey mentions that Claudia was the daughter of the Welsh King Caractacus. Pudens, the husband of Claudia, was believed to be a Roman Senator. Further historical references are made, in which it is pointed out that the Welsh churches, located in the rugged, remote mountain country of Wales, survived many persecutions over the succeeding centuries. This brief history outlines the most likely origin of Primitive Baptists churches in America today, which we believe maintain the same doctrine and practice from first century churches. The following Welsh Baptists 1655 Midland Confession of Faith, is still believed

today by “old line” Primitive Baptists. The doctrine is easy to understand, logical and is God honoring.

1655 Midland Confession of Faith

1st. We believe and profess, that there is only one true God, who is our God, who is eternal, almighty, unchangeable, infinite, and incomprehensible; who is a Spirit, having His being in Himself, and giveth being to all creatures; He doth what He will, in heaven and earth; working all things according to the council of His own will.

2nd. That this infinite Being is set forth to be the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three agree in one. I John V.7.

3rd. We profess and believe the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, to be the word and revealed mind of God, which are able to make men wise unto Salvation, through faith and love which is in Christ Jesus; and that they are given by inspiration of God, serving to furnish the man of God for every good work; and by them we are (in the strength of Christ) to try all things whatsoever are brought to us, under the pretence of truth. II Timothy iii.15-17; Isaiah viii.20

4th. That though Adam was created righteous, yet he fell through the temptations of Satan; and his fall overthrew, not only himself, but his posterity, making them sinners by his disobedience; so that we are by nature children of wrath, and defiled from the womb, being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. Psalm 51:5; Romans v.12-13

5th. That God elected and chose, in His Eternal council, some persons to life and salvation, before the foundation

of the world, whom accordingly He doth and will effectually call, and whom He doth call, He will certainly keep by His power, through faith to salvation. Acts xiii.48; Ephesians 1.2-4; II Thessalonians ii.13; I Peter i.2, etc.

6th. That election was free in God, of His own pleasure, and not at all for, or with reference to, any foreseen works of faith in the creature, as the motive thereunto. Ephesians i.4, Romans xi.5,6

7th. That Jesus Christ was, in the fullness of time, manifested in the flesh; being born of a woman; being perfectly righteous, gave himself for the elect to redeem them to God by His blood. John x.15; Ephesians v.25-27; Revelation v.9

8th. That all men until they be quickened by Christ are dead in trespasses--Ephesians ii.1; and therefore have no power of themselves to believe savingly--John xv.5. But faith is the free gift of God, and the mighty work of God in the soul, even like the rising of Christ from the dead--Ephesians i.19. Therefore consent not with those who hold that God hath given power to all men to believe to salvation.

9th. That Christ is the only true King, Priest, and Prophet of the Church. Acts ii.22-23; Hebrews iv.14, viii.1, etc.

10th. That every man is justified by Christ--Romans viii.33; I Corinthians vi.11; apprehended by faith; and that no man is justified in the sight of God partly by Christ and partly by works. Romansiii.20, 28, 30; Galatians v.4

11th. That Jesus of Nazareth, of whom the scriptures of the Old Testament prophesied, is the true Messiah and

Saviour of men; and that He died on the cross, was buried, rose again in the same body in which He suffered and ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high, and appeareth in the presence of God, making intercession for us.

12th. That all those who have faith wrought in their hearts by the power of God, according to His good pleasure, should be careful to maintain good works, and to abound in them, acting from principles of true faith and unfeigned love, looking to God's glory as their main end. Titus iii.8; Hebrews xi.6; I Corinthians vi.10-13.

13th. That those who profess faith in Christ, and make the same appear by their fruits, are the proper subjects of Baptism. Matthew xxviii.18, 19.

14th. That this baptizing is not by sprinkling, but dipping of the persons in water, representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Romans vi.3, 4; Colossians ii.12; Acts viii.38, 39.

15th. That persons so baptized ought, by free consent, to walk together, as God shall give opportunity in distinct churches, or assemblies of Zion, continuing in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers, as fellow-men caring for one another, according to the will of God. All these ordinances of Christ are enjoined in His Church, being to be observed till His Second Coming, which we all ought diligently to wait for.

16th. That at the time appointed of the Lord, the dead bodies of all men, just and unjust, shall rise again out of their graves, that all may receive according to what they have done in their bodies, be it good or evil.

Modern Primitive Baptist Articles of Faith

The following is an example of a modern Primitive Baptist Articles of Faith. These Articles of Faith were adopted May 12, 2002 by Augusta Old Line Primitive Baptist Church, Augusta, Georgia.

1) Triune God. We believe in one true and living God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; that these Three are One, and are harmoniously equal in infinite power, wisdom, justice, holiness, mercy, love and truth.

- Deuteronomy 6:4 *“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:”*
- 1 John 5:7 *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.”*

2) The Bible. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (in English, the AV 1611 King James Translation which uses the Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament text and the Received Greek New Testament text... Textus Receptus) to be the inspired word of God, and that they alone are to govern God’s people both in faith and practice.

- 2 Peter 1:19-21 *“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

- 2 Timothy 3:16 *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*
- Psalms 12:6-7 *“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”*

3) Total Depravity. We believe God created Adam good, able to stand but liable to fall, and that Adam fell from this pure estate and brought himself and his posterity under condemnation and death, and that man, being utterly depraved, has no ability nor desire to deliver himself from this condition. We do not believe that God is or was the cause of this sin.

- Romans 5:12 *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”*
- Psalms 14:2 *“The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”*

- Romans 3:10-18 *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*
- Romans 8:7 *“Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”*
- James 1:13 *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:”*

4) Unconditional Election. We believe God chose and predestinated a people to eternal salvation, and that this choice was made before the foundation of the world, and was both particular and unconditional.

- Ephesians 1:4-6 *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory*

of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

- 2 Timothy 1:9 *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”*
- Romans 9:11-13 *“(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”*
- Romans 8:28-33 *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.”*

5) Limited Atonement. We believe God was in Christ and that by the sacrifice of Jesus, all who God chose unto salvation were forever redeemed

from the curse of the law, and made righteous in Him.

- John 10:30 *“I and my Father are one.”*
- Romans 4:25 *“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”*
- Galatians 4:4-7 *“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”*

6) Irresistible Grace. We believe all who were redeemed by the Son will in time be effectually Called by Christ through the Holy Spirit (eternal spiritual life), made partakers of the divine nature, made to possess the fruit of the Spirit and these will “know God” by having His laws written in their hearts, and will be held accountable by God to these laws during their lifetime.

- Ephesians 2:1 *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:”*
- John 5:25 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”*

- John 6:63 *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*
- Titus 3:5 *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"*
- Galatians 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."*
- Hebrews 8:10-11 *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."*
- Romans 2:12-16 *"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."*

7) Temporal Salvation. We believe the gospel is the good news of God's salvation by the finished work of Jesus Christ. It is intended solely for God's elect born again children, for their good, joy and happiness. It brings life and immortality to light, and by it, we are fed spiritually. Belief and obedience to the gospel by the performing of "good works" provides a great reward in this life and a timely deliverance (temporal salvation) from spiritual ignorance, a life displeasing to God, and from the pitfalls of this world, our flesh and the devil. We also avoid the chastening rod of God's wrath here in this life by living in obedience to His word. The gospel has no role in the eternal salvation of God's children and many of God's elect will never be converted to the truth of the gospel unto discipleship (infant deaths, mentally afflicted, those in remote parts of the world, or those who in an act of rebellion reject the gospel in unbelief).

- 2 Timothy 1:10 *"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."*
- Acts 20:28 *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

- Ephesians 2:10 *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”*
- Titus 3:8 *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”*
- Matthew 5:16 *“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*
- 2 Timothy 3:16 *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”*
- Matthew 11:28-29 *“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”*
- Acts 2:40 *“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”*
- Hebrews 10:26-31 *“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will*

recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

- 2 Timothy 2:13 *“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.”*

8) Preservation of the Saints. We believe all who are quickened by Christ through the Holy Spirit (Effectually Called) will be finally saved. Not one can be finally lost.

- John 6:37-39 *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”*
- John 10:27-30 *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.”*
- Romans 8:38-39 *“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

9) Final Judgment. We believe the bodies of all men, the just and the unjust, will be resurrected from the grave, and that the joys of the righteous just (elect) will be eternal, and that the punishment of the unjust will be everlasting.

- 1 Corinthians 15:52 *“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*
- John 5:28-29 *“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”*
- Matthew 25:31-46 *“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an*

hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

- Luke 16:23-24 *“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”*

10) Ordinances of the church. We believe Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of the Church, and that born again believers are the

only proper subjects for Baptism, and that immersion is the only mode, and that none except those who have been regularly baptized are to be admitted in the Communion Service; and that the washing of the saint's feet is an example of love and humility which should be practiced by the members of the church.

- Acts 2:41-42 *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*
- 1 Peter 3:20-21 *“Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:”*
- Romans 6:4 *“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:”*
- Matthew 26:26-28 *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my*

blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

- John 13:14 *“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet.”*

11) Ministry. We believe no man has the right to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper but such as are regularly called and come under the imposition of hands by a presbytery.

- 1 Timothy 4:14 *“Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.”*
- 2 Timothy 2:2 *“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”*
- Titus 1:5 *“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.”*

12) Church government. We believe the Church is the only ecclesiastical authority on earth, subject unto God alone for all her acts, and that her form of government is congregational, each member having an equal voice in all of her acts.

- Matthew 18:17-18 *“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”*
- 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 *“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”*
- Acts 1:23-26 *“And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”*