

The Truth Shall Set You Free



The Doctrine of Salvation

64 Days of Truth
Days 36-42
Heritage Bible Church

64 Days of Truth is designed to help Christians understand the great doctrines of the Bible. As you spend the rest of your life feasting on the word of God (the Bible), you should forever expand and deepen your knowledge of these things.

During the 64 Days, listen to the weekly messages with an open heart and an open Bible . . . Spend a few minutes each day to study on your own, using the devotional guides in this booklet . . . Spend an hour or so each week with a discussion group, talking about the importance of what you learn.

Most of all, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen" (2 Peter 3:18).

Scripture quotations are from the New American Standard Bible.

DAY 36: Wednesday Message, "The Truth Shall Set You Free"

If you can, take notes, and pay special attention to these key points. (When you get to your discussion group, compare notes to help each other get it all.)

Several key words are at the core of the doctrine of salvation. Try to catch the definitions of them:

Grace

Faith

Repentance

Adoption

Atonement

Election

Justification

Propitiation

Reconciliation

Redemption

Regeneration

Sanctification

Security

Begin memorizing Ephesians 2:8-10: *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

DAY 37: Thursday. Your Past: Erased And Forgiven

There are three "tenses" of salvation. Today you will consider the past tense of your salvation. This is your foundation in Christ. In the past—at the moment you put your genuine faith in Jesus Christ—you were saved from the *penalty* of sin, forever. What do these verses say about it?

Ephesians 2:5, 8¹

Romans 8:1

Ephesians 1:3

1 John 2:12, Psalm 103:10-12

Take a minute to thank God for what He has done for you.

Fill in the blanks:

_____ ; *and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

¹"Have been saved" is a perfect passive form. Perfect means completed action in past time; passive means that you receive the action, you do not do it yourself.

DAY 38: Friday. Your Present: Free And Empowered

Today we look at the "present tense" of salvation- your current life with Christ. You "have been saved" in the past, and you now are in a growth process. Now you are saved from sin's *power*. What do these verses say about it?

Romans 6:5-7.

Ephesians 3:14-16. What does Paul pray for you to have?

Ephesians 3:20-21. How does God get His work done?

Romans 8:2. What is your relationship to the law and sin?

John 8:32, 36.

Take a minute to thank God for what He is doing in you.

Fill in the blanks: _____; _____
_____, _____; *not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

DAY 39: Saturday. Your Future: No More Groaning

You have been saved from the penalty of sin; you are now saved from its power. In the future, you will be delivered from the presence of sin forever. See for yourself:

Romans 8:22²

Romans 7:24-25a

Romans 8:29-30 When did this sequence begin? When will it end? Are you there yet? Now look at 8:28.

John 5:28-29, Revelation 20:6

Take a minute to thank God for what He is going to do.

Fill in the blanks: _____; _____
_____. For
*we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand,
that we should walk in them.*

²8:16 says your current standing is adopted by God; 8:22 describes the final step—when your body redeemed and glorified.

DAY 42: Tuesday. Review/Prepare

1. Write out the memory item for this week (as many times as you need to, until you know it by heart).
2. Tomorrow's message is on "Ecclesiology," the Doctrine of the Church. Look up these Scriptures, read them a couple of times, and think about them to prepare your heart and mind:

Ephesians 1:22-23

1 Corinthians 12:12

Ephesians 4:3

Acts 2:42

Hebrews 10:24-25, 13:17

Can you define "the church?"

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION
THINGS TO REMEMBER

Know the definitions of key salvation words:

Grace
Faith
Repentance
Adoption
Atonement
Election
Justification
Propitiation
Reconciliation
Redemption
Regeneration
Sanctification

Be able to explain what the Bible says about your security in Christ. If a person believes he or she can lose salvation, it affects living the Christian life in many undesirable ways.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (memorized)

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The Truth Shall Set You Free
64 Days of Truth, Days 36-42: Soteriology
Discussion Guide

1. How do each of these passages describe what it takes in order to be saved?

John 3:16

Romans 10:9-10

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Acts 16:30-31

John 20:30-31

Ephesians 2:8-9

Luke 24:46-47

2. Write how each of these passages describes a person who is saved:

Ephesians 2:10

John 13:34-35

Acts 2:42

1 John 3:17-18

Luke 6:46-49

John 8:31-32

Hebrews 10:24-25

3. What should you tell someone who asks "How can I be saved?" or "How can I become a Christian?"

4. What would be your counsel to a person who claims to be a Christian, but does not attend church, doesn't like Christians, and doesn't read the Bible?

You And Your Sin

64 Days of Truth, Days 29-35: Anthropology & Hamartiology

Discussion Guide

1. What characteristics make man different from animals? In other words, what does it mean that we are made in the image and likeness of God?

Man is a reasonable being (capable of reasoning); Is free to make certain choices; Is a moral being (knowing right and wrong); Has a will; Has emotions he is aware of; Is a social being (intended to have relationships); Is immortal; Is self-conscious (can examine himself).

2. Is the image and likeness of God destroyed by our sin? On what do you base your answer?

Genesis 9:6 prescribes capital punishment for murder based on our being in the image of God. James 3:9 implies that all are in the likeness of God and we should therefore not curse anyone with out tongues. Genesis 9:6 is stated long after man fell into sin. To kill someone (even a fallen person) is to strike at the image of God. Therefore, even fallen man is considered to be in the image of God (regardless of how our sin taints God's original intention for us).

3. Why is racism anti-God?

Because all men are descended from the same original parents, created directly by God. All the genetic variation in the human race was present in Adam and Eve. The sorting out of people in the Bible is based on language and on migration after the flood. If all humans are not alike, there could not be one Savior for all.

4. What are the three kinds of conscience mentioned in the New Testament? Find the references. How do you adjust your conscience?

Good conscience (1 Timothy 1:5). **Seared** conscience (1 Timothy 4:2). **Weak** conscience (1 Corinthians 8:9-12, and the idea all through 1 Corinthians 8-10 and Romans 14:1-15:13). **Good** = agreeing with Scripture regarding what is sin and what is not sin. **Seared** = Insensitive; does not warn you that something is sin. **Weak** = Oversensitive; tells you things are sin when they are not. You adjust your conscience by letting God's word renew your mind (Romans 12:2). 1 Timothy 1:5 ties it to love, a pure heart, and a sincere faith. In other words, your conscience gets more healthy as you grow spiritually. Call attention to the "smoke detector" analogy in the devotions for this week.

5. Where did sin originate? How do we know?

Among the angels, when Satan rebelled and took 1/3 of the angels with him. (If you want a side trip, read about his fall in Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:12-17, along with Revelation 12:3-4.) We know that when God created everything, it was "good," but that Satan had fallen by the time of Genesis 3, when he tempted Eve. Sin did not originate in mankind until Adam sinned (Romans 5:12).

6. Explain what total depravity means and what it does not mean.

Does not mean: Every person sins as often or as seriously as others; Every person is equally evil in thought or deed; Every person commits every sin; Every sin has the same consequences; Anyone is beyond the offer of God's grace. **Does mean:** You are completely sinful; All aspects of your being are tainted by sin; You can do nothing to rescue yourself from sin; Your only hope is the grace and mercy of God.

Review the memory Item for this week: Genesis 1:27 and Romans 3:23-24

Sermon Title: The Truth Shall Set You Free – Doctrine of Salvation Speaker: Jim Harris
64 Days of Truth # 6 of 10
Scripture Text: Various Date: 3-27-19

Our Father, again, how we thank You for Your wonderful grace to us in Christ Jesus. We know that it is true what you've said in Your Word: "The truth shall set you free." Thank You for providing the way that we can be set free from our sins through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

We arrive at what would reasonably be called the pinnacle of Systematic Theology. I love every one of these doctrines; my favorite doctrine is this week's doctrine. This is what everything builds up to, and everything after this is related to it. This is all about what Christ has accomplished for us.

How Can You Be Saved From Your Sin? And, What Does it Mean When You Are Saved? Those are really going to be the two questions we're going to deal with today.

The Doctrine of Salvation is like a huge diamond, with many facets. You shine light on it and you see reflections all over the place. Discussing this doctrine, studying this doctrine, proclaiming it, and basking in its blessings is really a lifetime project; and by the way, it doesn't end with this life—it carries on into eternity.

So today, three things—a real simple outline. Number 1: How Can I Be Saved? What does the Bible say about what it takes to be saved from your sin? Number 2: What Does Salvation Include? And I have a way of approaching that which I think is manageable. And then, our usual final point: What Can Go Wrong?

Well, the obvious question is: "How can I be saved?" When Jesus was near the height of His popularity, many among the Jews were beginning to follow Him, and they were professing to believe that He was the Christ, that He was their Messiah. Remember, I told you: In that white space between Mark Chapter 9 and Mark Chapter 10 is *a whole gob* of chapters? Well, this comes from one of them: John Chapter 8:31-32, and then down to Verse 36. Jesus spoke this at one of the feasts in Jerusalem: "Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him"—now, hang onto that for a minute. "Believed in Him"—what did John mean by "believed in Him"? We'll answer that question later. "Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him"—or, *professed* to believe in Him, for sure—"If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine." Do you hear Him saying there that there are people who might *appear* to be disciples who aren't *truly* His disciples? (cf. Jn. 2:23-25; 6:64; Titus 1:16) And the distinction is: Do you abide in His Word? He continues: "And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." Down to Verse 36—"If the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." (NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted)

Now, He's using freedom, and this freedom-from-slavery terminology, to speak about the *true* freedom of: freedom from the *penalty* of sin, freedom from the *power* of sin—freedom from the *presence* of sin, ultimately. It includes freedom from every kind of bondage that this world can muster. So, salvation is *true* spiritual freedom. And it's crucial, therefore, to know: "What truth do I need to know in order to have this great freedom? How does the Bible say that I can be set free from the obligations that my sin has brought me into be way of its penalty?"

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During Paul the Apostle's Second Missionary Journey, he and his coworker, Silas, were thrown into prison in the city of Philippi. They were set free by a miraculous earthquake. It was a *very* specific earthquake—it opened all the doors and unfastened everybody's chains; it was clearly a miracle. We read about it in Acts Chapter 16, Verses 26 and 27. Right after that earthquake, "When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped." His thinking, obviously, was: "Killing myself is better than what my boss will do to me if I let a bunch of sleeping prisoners get out of my jail in the middle of the night."

So, he figured his life was over—and he was probably right, on that score. But, read on: Acts Chapter 16, Verse 28—"But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!' " The prisoners rescuing the jailer...I love that. "And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas"—who, by the way, had been praising God all the time that they were in the prison there; the jailor knew this. "And after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'" "

Why would he ask a question like *that*? *He had been hearing these guys!* Another way you could put it is: "What was that you've been saying day after day after day after day about what I have to do to be saved? I'm *ready!* What must I do to be saved?" The *most* important question anyone will *ever* ask is *that* question. And, Lord willing, when you leave here tonight, you're going to know the answer better than ever.

Well, the answer from Paul and Silas was very clear: "They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.'" So we need to figure out what it means to "believe." We know who the Lord Jesus Christ is, right? We've studied that. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved"—and by the way, that applies to: "you and your household." Your "household" doesn't get saved because you repent—it can be applied to anybody in the household, and this guy's family *did* believe (see vs. 34).

Having now been introduced to the Doctrine of Christ, you understand that "the Lord Jesus Christ" is *very specific terminology*. Do not believe in a "higher power" as you understand it to be. *The* Lord Jesus Christ—the *one and only* Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:5). *The* Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 2:36; Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:9-11). *The* Lord *Jesus*—that Man who "*is the Christ*" (Jn. 20:31). It's *very* important that you have that right. He *alone* can save you (1 Tim. 2:5). There *is* no other way (Is. 43:11). There *is* no other hope for salvation to be found anywhere (Jn. 3:36; 1 Jn. 5:12). And if you don't accept the truth about who the Lord Jesus is, *you cannot be saved* (Jn. 17:3). So that's why we hammered the Doctrine of Christ so hard (1 Jn. 5:20).

You *don't* have that freedom to "just believe"! *Not* all roads lead to Heaven (Prov. 14:12). All religions are *not equal!* All but *one of them* are equal—they're all works-salvation, except what the Bible teaches (Gal. 2:16). Christianity is not compatible with *any other system*. Acts Chapter 4, Verse 12—this is Peter preaching: "There is salvation in *no one else*; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

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Oh, and by the way: Jesus said it. You know this verse: John 14:6—"Jesus said to him"—to Thomas, in answer to the question that he had asked—"I am *the way*"—the *one and only way*—"and *the truth*"—the truth you need to know—"and *the life*"—the eternal life you need—"No one comes to the Father but through Me."

So let's talk about that crucial question: How Can I Be Saved? It's not hard to remember: Ephesians 2:8-9—"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." Now, there's a key word there: "grace." The Greek word that is translated "grace" has a very wide range of meanings, just like the English word "grace"—that we most often use to translate that Greek word *charis*—in English, it has a lot of meanings; in Greek it has a wide range. When it's used in a place like this, the meaning is *very* specific and very rich. So, here is a very carefully-worded definition of "grace"; it comes from the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, one of the most highly-respected lexicons in the English language. Here's the definition: "Grace" is "the merciful kindness by which God, exerting His holy influence upon souls, turns them to Christ keeps, strengthens, increases them in Christian faith, knowledge, and affection; and kindles them to the exercise of the Christian virtues." Man, I wish I could just think up stuff like that!

"Merciful kindness" means that this "grace" is completely unmerited favor. Mercy—that's not what you *deserve*! That's generosity *undeserved*. You *deserve* God's "wrath" (Rom. 1:18). You *get* mercy (Rom. 5:9; Eph. 2:4). You *deserve* "punishment" (Prov. 10:16; Is. 13:11). You get "kindness" (Eph. 2:7). It is His "merciful kindness" to us.

"Grace" is, *by its very definition*, that which *cannot be merited*; it *cannot be earned* (Mk. 8:37). It's the *opposite* of what you've earned. Another verse I'm sure you know: Romans 6:23—"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." See the opposites? "Wages"—that's what you've earned and deserve (Rom. 4:4); "free gift"—that's the opposite.

"Faith" is the means by which the grace of God is appropriated by a sinner. You put your faith in what God has done. It's *His* grace, and *you* believe it. "Faith" is the way to translate the noun form of the word; the verb is "believe"—or, in some places, "trust." That's what it means.

Now, remember in John 8—some "had believed" in Jesus, and then He said: "Well, if you abide in My Word, you are *truly* My disciples"—implying that there are *phony* disciples and *true* disciples. Here's the key to that: The word "faith" is used at three levels, if you will. It's legitimate to use the word "faith," but when you're talking about faith, there are *different kinds of faith*.

It all starts with *mental assent* to the facts. Somebody says something to you, and you say: "I believe you. I believe that what you say is true. I am assenting, agreeing to, the facts as presented."

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There is *false faith* which does *not* endure and does *not* save, as in: "You're not really My disciple. And it becomes obvious that you're not really My disciple." In other words, there is fleeting faith (Lk. 8:13; Heb. 3:14).

And then, there is *saving faith*. That kind of faith includes the total trust, commitment, and obedience focused on Jesus Christ (see Jn. 3:36; Heb. 5:9; Rev. 14:12). The parable that Jesus gave about the sower who sowed seed on four different kinds of soil: Soil Number 1 represents someone who rejects; Soil Number 2 and Soil Number 3 portray people who say, "Yeah, I'm in!"—and then they fade away, and they're not saved, and they don't bear any "fruit" (Lk. 8:14; cf. Jn. 15:2, 6). Soil Number 4 is saving faith.

So, to have "saving faith," you have to *know* the facts of the Gospel. What are the facts of the Gospel? Christ died for your sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Cor. 15:1-4). Then, you have to *agree* that the facts are true. And, you have to make a *personal commitment* to put your trust in Him to save you—to trust Him totally, exclusively, and relentlessly (Ps. 112:7; Prov. 3:5; Col. 1:23). You have no hope, other than Him—that's the attitude of saving faith.

A drowning man has to believe not only, somebody sent the boat, and that the boat is near him, and that the boat *can* save him—he has to *get in the boat*, or he's going to drown! You can believe *all* you want to of the *stuff* about Jesus, but if you're not "in Christ" (Rom. 8:1), *you're not in the boat!* You're not saved.

Now, in the case of salvation, this "getting in the boat" is described by a whole bunch of different words. It is "repenting"—turning away from sin, turning to Christ (Mk. 1:15; cf. Prov. 28:13; Is. 55:7; Ezek. 18:32; 33:11; Lk. 5:32; Acts 20:21). It is "believing" (Jn. 3:16)—it's "trusting" Him (2 Tim. 1:12). It is "receiving" Christ (Jn. 1:12)—*welcoming* Him into your life. It is called "coming" to Christ (Matt. 11:28). It is called "accepting" Christ (1 Thess. 2:13). It's called "committing" yourself to Christ (Ps. 10:14). It's called "believing" in Christ (Jn. 20:31). It's called "obeying the Gospel" (2 Thess. 1:8). That's all the *human side* of salvation. That's what Paul and Silas meant by the answer to the question: "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now, understand: *faith itself* does not save you. It's *not true* that "if you just have enough faith" in *something*, and you're sincere about it, you're going to be saved. To be *very precise* with the facts: Even *faith in Christ* does not save you! It is *Christ Himself* who saves you. So don't be *trusting* in your *faith*—you're "trusting in the Lord" (Phil. 1:14). Do you see the important distinction there? Faith is the *instrument* by which the grace of God is *appropriated* by a man or a woman, bringing them to salvation (Rom. 3:22; 5:2; Gal. 3:14, 26).

True faith includes repentance, which means changing your mind away from one thing toward the other—turning away from your sin, turning to God through Christ (Is. 55:7; Acts 3:19; 26:18; 1 Thess. 1:9). Our Russian friends always talk about when someone "repented" (Matt. 12:41). I like the fact that they say *it* in that way, because that's very, very Biblical.

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We get kind of squashy about it in our world. Find me the verse that says: "Accept Jesus into your heart." It's *nowhere!* Repenting and putting your faith in Him—*oh, yeah* (Mk. 1:15). Coming to Him—*oh, yeah* (Matt. 11:28). Receiving Him, in the sense of embracing Him as your Lord and Savior—*oh, yeah* (Col. 2:6).

So, *guess* what I'm going to have you memorize this week? Some of you are saying, "Oh, yes! I already know this one!" I'm giving you *three whole verses*: Ephesians 2:8-10—"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." I wouldn't have to apologize for anything if *all I did* for teaching you the Doctrine of Salvation was preach on those three verses for about four Wednesdays in a row, and just take every rabbit trail—*it's all there!*

Question Number 1—How Can I Be Saved? Question Number 2—What Does Salvation Include? Here's where it gets to be so, *so rich!*

At its *very core*, you can think of salvation as a great spiritual exchange. This is the doctrine known as "Imputation." We don't use that word very much anymore, but it's a very crucial word. To "impute" means: "to credit to one's account." If I have access online to your bank account, I could take my money and I could put it in your account; I would be "imputing" it to you. So, to "impute" means "to credit to one's account." Here's the exchange: Your sin is put on Jesus Christ *as if He lived* your sinful life; *all your sin* is put on Christ (2 Sam. 12:13; cf. Ps. 32:2; Is. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24). Christ's righteousness, then, is put to *your account as if you lived* His perfect life of absolute obedience and perfect righteousness (Phil. 3:9; cf. Matt. 3:15, 17; Heb. 7:26; 1 Pet.; 2:22). Now, that is a *good deal!* That's a *really* good exchange.

It's summarized most succinctly at the end of Second Corinthians Chapter 5—Verses 20 and 21. Paul says: "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ"—I like that terminology. Our "citizenship" is somewhere else (Phil. 3:20; cf. Jn. 14:2-3). I'm an "ambassador" here; I represent the King. This isn't my home; I'm just visiting. "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us"—what's "entreating"? Asking. Begging. Inviting. *That's what we do when we preach the Gospel!* You don't say, "Well, you know, this is pretty cool; I kind of like it. You know, you might like it, too." *No!* That's not how he preached, and that's not how we should preach. "...as though God were entreating through us; we *beg* you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin"—that's Christ's "impeccability"—"to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." *What an exchange!*

Since salvation—God's plan for redemption of mankind—is the theme of the whole Bible, I'll tell you before we dive in any further that, it is *utterly impossible* to wrap our arms around all of this in one message...as if we could for any of the other doctrines, as well. But, that said—I *do* have an approach to this which I think will help you lay a good foundation upon which to build your understanding of your salvation for the rest of your life.

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One way to get a glimpse of the many facets of this *fantastic* diamond, which is the Doctrine of Salvation, is to look at Biblical words that God used to describe it. Remember, I told you, in doing a short series on Systematic Theology, this is the grid in which you can be filling in all the spots, every time you study a portion of Scripture. We've got the *big* grid of *all* Systematic Theology—now, in the "salvation" part of that grid, here are sort of the rows and the columns that you can start filling in.

By the way: the official, fancy word for the Doctrine of Salvation is "Soteriology." That's because the Greek verb that means "to save" is *sōzō*; and then, the noun that is derived from it, which means "salvation," is *sōtēria*; and then, the one who is the savior is the *sōtēr*—so, "Soteriology." If you're keeping all of your "ologies" straight, we've done Bibliology, Theology Proper, Christology, Pneumatology, and then last week was a twofer—we did Biblical Anthropology and Hamartiology. And we continue with "Soteriology."

So, I'm going to give these to you. And usually, when you give a list like this, you say, "In no particular order"—Well, hey, I've been studying theology a long time; I alphabetized them—just so it doesn't appear that we say one is more important than the other. These are *all* part of the Diamond. *Take any one of them away*, and you don't have the whole diamond—it's a package deal.

So, here we go. First word of this list is: "Adoption." It's used five times in the New Testament; all of them are in the writings of the Apostle Paul (Rom. 8:15, 23; 9:4; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). The word "adoption" means: "placing as a son." In other words, it connotes the idea of being given total, perfect, permanent status as a son—and therefore, an heir—in a family into which you were not originally born.

It's been 39 years since Marsha and I became parents by adoption. We met our son at the hospital the day after he was born. We had done all the prior paperwork that we could; all the things were in order. So, we became his legal guardians that day; and immediately, the *formal* process of adoption began, and the wheels started to turn. Weeks later, the three of us—me, Marsha, and our son—stood before the judge; he went over all the paperwork; he asked us to spell his name exactly the way we wanted it to be done legally; and then, he banged down the gavel, and he declared that he was making the adoption final. We went home, we had a party—it was cool. After that, several weeks later, we received his birth certificate in the mail. I cried when I saw it; it lists me as the father, it lists Marsha as the mother; it has the time, place, and date of his birth, his weight, his footprint—all of that good stuff...and *no record whatsoever* of his past, *no record* of the sinful relationship which brought him into this world. He is *fully* our son, *perfectly* our heir, and *nothing* can change that!

My friends: if you belong to Christ, *you are adopted!* You have a new "born again" birth certificate in which your sinful past is *forgotten!* (Jer. 31:34) It's *cancelled!* (Ps. 103:12) It has *all been paid for!* (Mic. 7:19; Col. 2:14)) And your position in the family of God is *secure* and *permanent!* You're not on "probation"! You can't earn yourself *one more millimeter* into the Kingdom of God! It's *done!* You're adopted.

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Second word: "Atonement." The words that convey the concept of "atonement" are mainly in the Old Testament, because there was so much about the sacrificial system that all pictures Christ there (see Is. 53:10; 1 Cor. 5:7; cf. Col. 2:17). The New Testament ideas are related to "Reconciliation"—which we're going to get to when we get to the "R" in this list. The words about "atonement" carry the connotation of "that which covers or pays for your sin" (e.g., Ps. 32:1). In all the Old Testament pictures that lead up to Christ, "atonement" is accomplished only by *blood* sacrifice (Heb. 9:22b). And you couldn't just go *give a pint* of blood—the animal that was being sacrificed had to *die*, and then the blood of the innocent one is sprinkled on the altar on behalf of the guilty one. And so that death of the innocent one benefits the guilty one; that's what "atonement" is.

Classic verse: Leviticus 17:11—"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement." (cf. Col. 1:20, 22) So it couldn't be just blood from an animal that got hit by a chariot; it has to be the blood of the animal that *died*, that was the "unblemished" animal that was brought by faith by the one who needed to make atonement (Ex. 12:5). Now, all of that builds to the New Testament, where Jesus Christ is the *perfect* "once for all" sacrifice (Heb. 7:26-27; cf. 1 Pet. 1:19). The Book of Hebrews makes a *great big deal* about the fact that all of those sacrifices in the Old Testament had to be repeated over and over and over and over; Jesus made "*one* sacrifice for sins" *once*, and He "*sat down*" (Heb. 10:12). No priest ever sat down in the Tabernacle or in the Temple, because their work was never done. Jesus "*finished*" the work (Jn. 19:30)—He paid the penalty so you never need to (Heb. 10:14).

Now, before we leave "atonement," let me just introduce this to you if you've never heard of it before; let me disappoint you if you've studied it a lot. There's a long-standing debate among Christian theologians concerning the *extent* of the Atonement. You've probably heard of "Calvinism, Calvinists." You've probably heard of a five-letter acronym for the famous "Five Points of Calvinism"—which were not invented by Calvin; he never thought them up, he never preached on them, he *never* put it together that way.

Somebody came along *later* and *rejected* many of the facets of the Protestant Reformation—a man named "Arminius." After Calvin and Arminius were both gone, there was this debate over what actually represents what the Bible teaches. In response to Arminius's objections to very important doctrines, the Synod of Dort—they weren't calling somebody a "Dort," that was the name of the city where the Synod was held—they came up with this five-point summary that has been called "The Five Points of Calvinism." Calvin did not *invent* "Calvinism." Calvin would be rolling over in his grave if he knew we were calling him an "ism," if we were following him—he pointed everybody to Christ.

Here's the key point: In the "Five Points of Calvinism," one of the points is: "Limited Atonement." The acronym is "TULIP," and the "L" stands for "Limited Atonement." Limited Atonement says that the intention of God before the foundation of the world was that He would give a group of redeemed people to His Son as a Bride—so far, so good—and He sent His Son to die for the sins of those who were to be His Bride—they are the Elect—and that Christ

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came for the purpose of dying to pay for the sins of the Elect, *and only* for the Elect—He did not die for the sins of anyone else, and that was never His purpose. That's the strong fifth point of Calvinism.

Now, without entering into the debate itself, suffice it to say: Christ's death was, *according to the Bible*, atonement for the sins "of the whole world" (1 Jn. 2:2). But in the end, let me ask you: Are *all* the people in the human race going to be with us in the "new heaven" and the "new earth" (Rev. 21:1)? No. So, *very clearly*, there is "limited atonement." It's not because the value of the atonement ran out—it's because not everyone puts their faith in Christ (see Matt. 7:13-14, 21-23; 25:41).

Unless you believe that no one will be in the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:10, 14-15), you believe in "Limited Atonement" (see Jn. 8:24; cf. Mk. 3:29). *I believe in "Limited Atonement"*—I just don't believe in "Limited Atonement" exactly the way that *Hyper-Calvinists* like to say it, and make it a point of fellowship. I don't believe that. The only question is, if Jesus did not really die for the sins "of the whole world." (see Heb. 2:9; Titus 2:11)

And one of the reasons that I have preached that sermon—which I think is my most downloaded one around the world—called: "Calvinism and Arminianism: No Thank You," is that I say I don't want to be linked with *either one* of those theological labels, because they're so *skinny!* Don't judge me on five points of doctrine—*I've got 110 more!*

One of the things I said in that sermon is: I cannot be under the banner of Arminianism because Arminians have to take certain verses of the Bible and explain why they don't mean what they say. I cannot, in good conscience, be under the label of "Five-Point Calvinist" because Five-Point Calvinists have to tell you that certain verses of the Bible do not mean what they say, like—here's the famous one: First John 2:2. Verse 1 says: "I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Then, Verse 2—"and He Himself is the propitiation"—that is, the satisfactory sacrifice—"for our sins..." That means: He died for the sins of the "us," the "we," "our," the ones that John is talking about, the ones who "have fellowship with" him, "and...with the Father" (1 Jn. 1:3)—that's Christians. It says: "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." Now, if you say "ours, *and not ours only*, what do you mean? You mean: He died for the "sins...of the whole world." "For God so loved the world"—not only the Elect (see 1 Tim. 2:4; cf. Ezek. 33:11)—"that He gave His only begotten Son..." (Jn. 3:16).

Now, Five-Point Calvinists can explain to you all the places that "world" is used in a way that does not mean every man, woman, boy, and girl that ever lived on the face of the earth—*I get that*. Now, I realized immediately, when I said: "Suffice it to say that Christ's death was atonement for the sins of the whole world," I know that will *never* suffice for my "Five-Point Buck" friends. But, if you want to base my theology on five points, like I said, I feel really robbed of at least 95 percent of what I believe.

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Here's the limitation of the Atonement; it's because of this: Romans 3:10-11—"As it is written, 'There is none righteous'—we know that; we just studied the Doctrines of Man and Sin, right? "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God." The New Testament *very clearly* teaches that *only those whom the Father "draws" will come to Christ* (Jn. 6:37, 44-45), and will have His perfect, infinitely-valuable atoning death applied to them (Heb. 10:26-27). The New Testament teaches: "Before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), God chose to redeem *that specific group of people* who would become the Bride of Christ, His "church" (Eph. 5:25)—they are "the elect" (Rom. 8:33), the ones that are "chosen" (Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1; Rev. 17:14).

So, it's time for a new word. What do we mean by "the Elect"? The words "elect," or "choose," or "chosen" come from a Greek word that means: "to pick out for oneself," or, "to choose for oneself" (see Jn. 15:19; cf. Deut. 7:6; Ps. 4:3)—just like you do all the time. You walk through that beautiful, colorful produce department at the store, and you select *the apples* that you want to take home. You do that all the time. The Scriptures teach that *God chose beforehand* those who would be saved (2 Tim. 1:8-9; cf. Jn. 6:39, 65). Now, a lot of people *really don't like* this doctrine. I'm *sorry* if somebody doesn't like it! I *can't say* that the Bible doesn't teach it, because the Bible *could not be more clear!*

Ephesians Chapter 1, Verse 4—"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world..." Now, I've heard *that* explained by some of my Arminian friends like this: "Yeah, see—'He chose us *in Him*,' so, He's the bus, and if you're on the bus, you get to go where He chose to go!" That verse doesn't say that; it doesn't say that at all. It says: "He chose *us*"—if you would like, you can add the words "to be"—"in Him before the foundation of the world."

Or, get this one: Second Thessalonians 2:13. Paul is giving thanks for His brethren and sistren in Thessalonica, and he says: "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because"—you want the doctrine of Election? You *cannot* state it more clearly than this: "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation"—and how do you get there?—"through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth"—just exactly what we've seen in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit (see Jn. 3:5; Titus 3:5; cf. 1 Cor. 12:3b), and in "The Truth Shall Set You Free."

Do you see that clause? What's the subject of the clause? "God." What's the verb? "Has chosen"—past tense; His choice—He chose for Himself. What's the direct object of "chosen"? "You"—He has "chosen *you* from the beginning for salvation through sanctification..." (see Gal. 1:15-16; Rev. 17:8) God chooses who will be saved; that's "election." (see Rom. 9:11-16; cf. Acts 13:48)

Now, there are a couple of common errors about the Doctrine of Election. One of them is: taking it to the erroneous, non-Biblical extreme that we call "Double Predestination." That means that God actively chose some for salvation, and He *actively chose others* for damnation, and there are *billions* of people on this world who were born with God's *specific design for their life* that they rot in hell—"tormented...forever" in "the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:10).

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Now, it *does* say He *actively chose* those who will be saved (Rom. 9:23, "He prepared *beforehand*")—*it never says the opposite*: that some people are born *only* for the purpose of being tortured in hell. The second part of that "Double Predestination" is *not true!* Now, you say: "Well, if you have ten pairs of socks in your drawer, and you pick one, you *rejected* the other nine!" Okay—you can make logical arguments all you want to. I'm going to stand *only* on what the Scriptures say, and I maintain that it *does not say* that they are created *for the purpose* of being tortured forever in the lake of fire. We could go to Romans Chapter 9 and show how they *made themselves* ready for damnation (Rom. 9:22, "prepared"—see Ecc. 7:29; Is. 3:9, 11; Jer. 2:17; 31:30; Rom. 2:5; Eph. 4:18), because the Bible *always* teaches that—that every man, woman, boy, and girl is 100 percent responsible for their sin (Ezek. 18:4), and God is *not* responsible (Jas. 1:13).

The other common error is to *ignore* the Doctrine of Election because it's "*hard to understand*" (2 Pet. 3:16), and because, frankly, it offends some people's sensibilities (Rom. 9:19; cf. Ex. 16:7-8; Ezek. 18:29; Jn. 6:65-66; 1 Thess. 4:8). Therefore, some people say that it was a matter of God looking into the future—they take the word "foreknowledge" and twist it—that God looked into the future—because He knows "the end from the beginning" (Is. 46:10), right? Week 2: "Theology Proper"—so, He looked into the future to see who would choose Him, and that's how He chose *them* (contra Acts 2:23; 1 Pet. 1:20). Well, that turns God's sovereignty *upside down*; that makes the outcome depend on man, not on God; that's *very wrong* (see Eph. 1:11; cf. Jn. 1:13; 6:37, 44; 15:16; 17:2; Rom. 9:15-16; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 2:8-9). The Bible teaches that God is 100 percent totally responsible for salvation (Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:25; Heb. 12:2). Man is 100 percent totally responsible for sin (Ecc. 7:29), and for *rejecting* the grace which is freely offered (Jn. 3:19; 5:40).

Now, here's where Election comes together: Given the fact that "There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands"—and get this next phrase—"there is none who seeks for God" (Rom. 3:10-11)—on their own, no one, *no one*, and I think I meant NO ONE will come to Christ on their own! It *can't be done* (Jn. 6:44) because you are "dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). I've done *a lot* of funerals—*not one time* has the person in the box willed themselves to life...but they're *all* going to be resurrected. How? By the power of God (Jn. 5:28-29). You can't make yourself "undead." It's *impossible!* You won't seek for God! The Doctrine of Election is so precious, because it's the explanation of how *anyone* is ever saved! Salvation is the work of God from beginning to end (Rom. 8:28-30). What did He say? "No one comes to the Father but through Me" (Jn. 14:6). "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (Jn. 6:44; cf. Jer. 24:7; Acts 16:14).

Now, is there *mystery* there? Yes! Will that *stretch your brain* in about 18 ways you didn't know it could stretch? Yes, it *will!* Can you *fully* explain all the details of it? No! (Is. 55:8-9; Rom. 11:33) But you had better stand *exactly* on what the Word of God says (see Is. 8:20; cf. Ps. 119:128; Jn. 17:17). "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation!"

You're saying: "Whoa, you're in trouble! You're only up to 'E'! You said you alphabetized these! You'd better hurry!" Okay—I'm going to hurry! They're going to get shorter as we go.

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"Justification" is the judicial act of God—He "is the Judge," after all (Ps. 75:7)—by which He declares you righteous—justifies you—on the basis of the righteousness of Christ imputed to you; and so, you are acquitted of all your sins (Rom. 3:24; 8:33; cf. Heb. 10:14). Justification is *not* a process—Justification is an instantaneous act. You are guilty in your sins, and then the gavel comes down: "Justified!" (Gal. 2:16)—your sins are gone! You cannot be *partly* guilty and *partly* justified in the sight of God. Justification is a once-for-all act (Jn. 5:24; Rom. 8:1).

And if you start studying the Doctrine of Justification, *oh boy!* You are going to be running all over the place, connecting to all kinds of things! Justification, that once-for-all act, results in: "peace with God" (Rom. 5:1), salvation from God's "wrath" (Rom. 5:9; 8:34), "inheritance" of eternal life (1 Pet. 1:4); ultimately, it leads to your "glorification" (Rom. 8:30). All of that comes with justification. It's a *package deal!* It's one diamond—all of these things glitter from that one diamond!

Now, we're going to skip several letters in the alphabet. Let's go to the next one, a word that we already saw when I quoted First John 2:2 to you: "Propitiation." This is the doctrine which says that Christ's death satisfied the "wrath of God" against you and your sin (Rom. 5:9). The word occurs only four times in the New Testament (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10). Only four places does the word occur; it doesn't need to occur 54 places to be true. God's wrath is *rightfully* aimed at your sin (Rom. 1:18), and Christ took that wrath upon Himself (Is. 53:5; 1 Pet. 3:18). When? On the Cross. And He cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46), and then He cried out, "It is finished!" (Jn. 19:30). He had done it!

And remember, "The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Matt. 27:51)—the veil that *only* the High Priest could enter through "once every year" on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:34), to go into "the Holy of Holies" (Heb. 9:3) and "sprinkle" the "blood" on the "mercy seat" (Lev. 16:14-15)—the top of the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 25:21). Guess what? The word "propitiation" comes from that Greek word for the "mercy seat."

Because the "once for all" sacrifice had been made (Heb. 9:12; 10:10), there *wouldn't be* a guy having to go in there every year, year after year after year, on behalf of the people—there *wouldn't be* those daily sacrifices, thousands of times a day, for so many people who were turning from their sin (Heb. 7:27). It's been applied "once for all" on the mercy seat, the veil is torn—*all* can come (Heb. 10:19-20). Jesus said: "Come to Me, *all* who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest...for your souls" (Matt. 11:28-29).

Next word: "Reconciliation." Reconciliation—Christ's death was the work of God to bring sinful man back into fellowship with Him by removing what caused the alienation—removing the sin (Is. 59:2; Col, 2:12-14; 1 Pet. 3:18), and removing the penalty for the sin (Rom. 8:1). Like we read in Second Corinthians 5:20. What do we mean when we say: "Be reconciled to God"? You're *separated* from Him. If I said to a husband and wife who had moved apart, pursuing divorce: "Be reconciled"—what do I mean? Come together! "We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

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Next word: "Redemption." That says that Christ paid the price to redeem you (Gal. 3:13). The word picture connotes that you were "a slave of sin" (Jn. 8:34), but He paid the price to redeem you from your slavery, so that you could belong to Him (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 4:5). The image of redemption is that a person is bought out of slavery for the purpose of being set free (Deut. 7:8); and having been set free, then you can joyfully follow the Master who bought you (Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 6:20). So, Galatians Chapter 5, Verse 1—"It was for freedom that Christ set us free"—that's terminology of redemption—"therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery." When you've been set free from your bondage to sin, *don't go back to it!* How silly would that be? (Rom. 6:2)

Alright, another "R" word: "Regeneration." Regeneration means "imparting eternal life through the work of the empowering, indwelling, life-giving Holy Spirit" (see Titus 3:5; cf. Ezek. 36:27; Jn. 3:5). I'm probably going to bend a word here: We could also call this, if you will, "resuscitation"—"brings you to life" (see Jn. 6:63; cf. 2 Cor. 3:6). So, the result of this is being "born again"—like He said to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:3)—so that you are now a "new creation" (Gal. 6:15), with a new relationship to God (Rom. 8:9), with a new orientation to life (Rom. 8:12-14), with new prevailing dispositions (Deut. 30:6; Phil. 2:13).

This is stated a whole bunch of ways in the New Testament. I think these are all related to the concepts of "regeneration": Regeneration is described as being "born again" (Jn. 3:3, 7; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23); it makes you "a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17); it is called "the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5); it's called being "alive from the dead" (Rom. 6:13); it's called being "made...alive together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5; cf. Col. 2:13); it's called "created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2:10)—that's that new, prevailing disposition toward your role in the world; and it's called "created in righteousness and holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

So think about this: Apart from Christ, you are "dead" (Eph. 2:1), "blind" (2 Cor. 4:4), "alienated" from God (Col. 1:21; cf. Eph. 4:18), and headed for hell (Eph. 2:3). Regeneration is the instantaneous passage from "death" to "life" (Jn. 5:24), from blindness into the light (Acts 26:18; cf. 2 Cor. 3:15; 4:6), from alienation to reconciliation (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 1:22), from hell to heaven (Ps. 103:4; Rom. 5:9; 8:1; 1 Thess. 1:10). Didn't I tell you this was a good deal? Didn't I tell you this is quite the transfer from one to the other?

Next word: "Sanctification." The word "sanctification" means "making holy," and in the Bible there are two senses of sanctification. One is "positional" sanctification. When God looks at you now, are you perfect? *No!* But when He looks at you, He sees you "clothed...with Christ" (Gal. 3:27; cf. Is. 61:10), so He sees you "in Christ" (1 Cor. 1:2)—He views you as "holy" (Col. 1:22; 3:12; Heb. 3:1; 10:14); we're all called "saints" (1 Cor. 1:2)—that means "holy ones."

Ephesians 1:3-4—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ"—past tense—"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him." That's your *position* of sanctification. (cf. Eph. 5:26-27)

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Then, there's "practical" sanctification—that's the *process* of maturing toward greater and greater practical demonstration of holiness (Heb. 12:14); it's a matter of living every day more and more like who you really are in Christ (Rom. 6:19; cf. Rom. 13:14; 2 Pet. 1:5-8). That's why Peter says this in First Peter 1:14-16: "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written"—here was the purpose of all those sacrifices, to point you to the One who could bring it to pass for you—"You shall be holy, for I am holy." (see Titus 2:11-14)

Or, the way Peter put it in his last epistle—Second Peter 3:18: "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." *Grow* into it! You don't *grow* into *salvation*—and if you read that whole sentence that I just quoted half of in Second Peter Chapter 3, you'll see it's *because* you are in Christ, "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." You "stand" in "grace" (Rom. 5:2)—but "grow in grace." You stand in Christ, but *grow* in Christlikeness (Col. 2:6). That's your *practical* sanctification. And Peter continues: "To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity." Be growing in holiness now, all the way until you are with Him in eternity (Prov. 4:18).

Next word—last word on my list: "Security." Everyone who is *truly* saved (2 Cor. 13:5; cf. Jn. 8:31; 1 Jn. 2:3-5), everyone who is the fourth kind of soil (Lk. 8:15; cf. Deut. 30:6), everyone who has put their faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18), everyone who has *truly* repented (Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:20; cf. Ps. 145:18), is eternally secure in that position and in that relationship to Jesus Christ (Ps. 37:28, 39-40; Jn. 6:39). Persevering faith (Rev. 14:12) is the continuous work of the Holy Spirit in your life (Ezek. 36:27; Jude 24), *by which* the work of God's grace—which begins in your "heart" (Acts 16:14)—is continued and brought to completion. In other words: since you've been adopted, you've got your birth certificate—you're an "heir" (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 4:7), you're going to get the "inheritance" (1 Pet. 1:4; cf. Heb. 6:17).

It means that once a person is saved—not just, once a person says so, not merely making external changes, not merely undergoing some kind of moral reformation, but once a person is truly trusting in Christ *and Christ alone*, he or she will never fall away (1 Pet. 1:5; cf. Jer. 32:40; Phil. 2:13). Want a great verse for that? There's a whole bunch of them, but how about Philippians 1:6? Paul says: "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you"—that's when He called you to Himself (Gal. 1:15)—"will perfect it"—that's as you move through this life and become more and more *practically* holy—"until the day of Christ Jesus." That verse covers your *whole life* as a Christian. "Began a good work"—justification, redemption, regeneration; "will perfect it"—practical sanctification and perseverance; and then, "until the day of Christ Jesus"—glorification.

In the *past*, you were saved from the *penalty* of your sin. Right now in the present, you are saved from the *power* of sin—it no longer controls you (Rom. 6:14); you have to battle, but you're not a slave to it (Rom. 6:17). And when you are with the Lord, you will be saved from the *presence* of sin (Heb. 12:23; cf. Rev. 21:4, 27).

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So, from *God's* view, the phrase "Eternal Security" is the appropriate terminology. From *man's* view, the more descriptive terminology is: "Perseverance of the Saints" (Rev. 14:12). By the way: that's the "P" in the "TULIP" of Calvinism. That's the right way to say it. It is God's work of preservation which provides man's endurance (Ezek. 36:27; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:13; 2 Thess. 3:5; Heb. 13:20-21).

John 10:27-29. Jesus is speaking: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand." And guess what? That means exactly what it says (see Rom. 8:38; 2 Tim. 4:18). Now, you can find some Arminian brethren who will try to explain to you that "never perish" doesn't mean "never perish," and "no one" doesn't mean "no one"—*but it does*—and Jesus said that! I always say it this way: There is *no such thing as* "temporary eternal life" (see Jn. 5:24). You're in Christ, or you're not. First John 5:12—"He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life."

So, where have we been? How Can I Be Saved? By grace, through faith, plus nothing. The work of God through Jesus Christ, who is the one and only way of salvation, is applied to you—that's what you put your faith in.

Number 2—What Does Salvation Include? I could summarize all the words on my list in the words of Ephesians 1:3—"Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ."

Final point: What Can Go Wrong with this? Satan attacks the Doctrine of Salvation more viciously than any other (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:26; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:8), because he knows: if he can confuse somebody on this one, they'll be with him forever in the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:10, 15; cf. Matt. 25:41; 2 Thess. 1:7-9). They won't *enjoy fellowship* there, but they'll be with him. So, I want to give you a rapid-fire list of things that can go wrong regarding the Doctrine of Salvation.

Adding works as a requirement for salvation. That one comes in a whole bunch of forms. The *number one entity on this planet* that *adds* works to faith for salvation is the Roman Catholic Church. They add sacraments as a requirement for salvation. They deny that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to your account; instead of "imputed," they say it is "infused into your life," so that you are then able to produce *your own merit* before God (contra Phil. 3:9). The Roman Catholic Church says that if you believe what we have just studied from the Bible, *you are accursed*—that is *their position* on salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, on the basis of those Scriptures alone, for the glory of God alone. They say, if you believe that, you're going to hell—*straight to hell!* Don't tell me Evangelicalism and Roman Catholicism need to get together! (see 2 Cor. 6:14-18; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Jn. 10-11)

Some denominations add baptism. We do baptism, right? Every time we can—as a joyful celebration that pictures what has been done for you in Christ (Acts 8:12, 38; 18:8; cf. Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12). But, there are people who treat baptism as a *deed* that is required

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for you to be saved. I actually heard a pastor talking to another pastor, and I was pastor number three, listening to them. They were in one of these denominations, and the mentioned a person—"Oh, I know him! Yeah, I know him! I baptized him into Christ!" And I thought, "I just met the Holy Spirit!" (see 1 Cor. 12:13) But they believe that—that *that act* is necessary for your salvation.

The newest version of works salvation that has crept in among some professing Evangelicals made a bit splash about 15 or 20 years ago, called: "The New Perspective on Paul." They say that the Church has, for all these centuries, misunderstood the Judaism and Pharisaism of Jesus's day—and it really wasn't all that bad, they say. Therefore, we have misunderstood Jesus. Therefore, we have misunderstood Paul. Therefore, we misunderstood the Doctrines of Justification and Sanctification, and we need a "new perspective." So they say that, when you come to Christ and put your faith in Him and are baptized, that's only *provisional*; that's like getting your "learner's permit," and then—if you pass the "driver's test" of your "works"—*then* you will be justified in the end. So, they put Justification at the *end* of the process, rather than at the beginning, in the Diamond, where it belongs.

That particular teaching infiltrated the lives and ministries of men who used to be colleagues of mine, some of whom I had a part in training, and some of whom are *blatantly* apostate. This stuff has consequences. Luke 1 Jn. 2:19 says: "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us." (cf. Heb. 3:14)

There are others. Another way to go wrong is to add to the Atonement. That's the error of the faith healing, health-and-wealth gospel—they say that physical healing is included in the Atonement. Now, when a *200-year-old* tells me that, I'm going to listen. But it's a problem.

Then, there's the "Lordship Salvation" controversy. That's the argument over whether you can accept Jesus in *two parts*. Can you have Jesus as your Savior, and then *later* take the aftermarket add-on option of making Him Lord? No, He *is* Lord (Jn. 13:13; cf. Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:36; Titus 1:16; 2:14; Jas. 2:26; 1 Jn. 2:3-5; Jude 4; Rev. 14:12; 1 Cor. 16:22 with Jn. 14:15 and 1 Jn. 5:3).

You *have* two choices about Jesus: accept Him, or reject Him. But He *is* Lord: "Every knee will bow...every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2:10-11)—and if you have Christ, you have Him as your Lord. Romans 10:9—"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." It's all a package deal.

Those who reject the Lordship of Jesus Christ accuse people like *us* of preaching "Lordship Salvation" (and they're the ones who invented the term)—they say, "Well, *you're* adding a requirement to faith! You're saying people have to believe *and* declare Him Lord!" No! You believe in Him *because* He is Lord—as Lord! And they call what *they* preach: "free grace."

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And I say it this way: The only salvation that there is comes from the one and only *Lord* Jesus Christ, so the *only possible salvation* is "Lordship Salvation." And "grace" which is not free *isn't grace! If it's not free, it's not grace!* Just accept Jesus Christ as who He is (Jn. 13:13)

Something else that can go wrong: Denying eternal security. It's a whole different mindset if you're triumphantly walking in this world, standing on the promises of God, secure in your faith (Rom. 8:37; 2 Cor. 2:14; Phil. 1:28), or—if you're trying not to slip on spiritual banana peels and fall out. *A whole different perspective* on how you respond to the world. (see Deut. 33:27; Ps. 37:24; Rom. 5:10; 8:32; Jude 24)

Then, there are those who reject the Doctrine of Election, Predestination, Foreknowledge—those three different words are three different ways of describing different aspects of it. That's a big problem because, if God isn't sovereign—if it all depends on *man*—boy, he's not really God. (see Jn. 6:37, 44; Rom. 9:15-16)

So I close with this: Some men followed the Apostle Paul around on his First Missionary Journey, and they preached—after he preached—that, "This 'salvation by grace through faith, plus nothing' was nice, but the *truth* is that Paul didn't want to lay all the rules on you, so, here are the rules now..." So they introduced the first assault on the Doctrine of Salvation, *adding in* the keeping of legalistic rules—so they were basically trying to make Pharisees out of the new converts (cf. Acts 15:5). Paul had some strong words for them: Galatians Chapter 1, starting at Verse 6—"I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting"—that's a strong word! If you add those rules as a requirement for salvation, you're *deserting Christ* when you add those rules!—"deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel"—and he used the word for "different" that means "*totally* different, not even similar"—"a different gospel which is really not another"—another of the same kind—"only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort *the*"—singular—"gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!"

You *cannot* change the Gospel—even a little—and be saved.

Know the truth, abide in the Word, and the Truth Will Set You Free.

So, Father, we look forward to the ultimate glorification that You have for us, that inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for us who are here, kept by the power of Your work in our lives. So, have Your way with us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.