

*ARE WE LIVING
IN THE
LAODICEAN
CHURCH
AGE?*

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NOTE

The term "The Word of God" is used in reference to the Bible, and often used in reference to Christ, who is the Word of God. Sometimes we use a small "w" and sometimes a capital "W" depending on the context.

Also in the first chapter we use a hyphen in the word Balaam. In the following references we do not.

ARE WE LIVING IN THE LAODICEAN CHURCH AGE?

INTRODUCTION

The church at Laodicea was neither hot nor cold. It was lukewarm. They thought they were rich. They were comfortable and complacent. However, Christ said they were miserable, wretched, naked, blind, and poor.

The problem with Laodicea was their message. Every church has a doctrine or a message. It is the very foundation of every church. It does not matter what the denomination is; it is founded on what they believe and that is their message.

The message at Laodicea should have been the New Testament message of; Christ died, was buried, and rose again, for the forgiveness of sin. All we must do is to believe in, trust in Christ and our sins are forgiven.

Laodicea represents the final stage of the church just before the rapture. It will have a lukewarm message of salvation by grace mixed with works. Lukewarm!

The Laodicean message of the end time church will mix the words, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," with, walk, say, do, ask, pray, kneel, turn from and so on. The simple gospel that Christ gave us and the apostles died for is no longer simple, and no longer easy.

When we preach this message we are condemned and accused of easy believism. We are told if you do not do something, or make an outward statement, or a sign of commitment, you are just not serious and cannot possibly be saved.

ARE WE LIVING IN THE LAODICEAN CHURCH AGE?

INTRODUCTION

The fact is we do believe that salvation is easy. Either it is by simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ or he himself must have lied (ref. John 3:15-16, 18; 5:24; 6:29, 35, 40, 47; 11:25-26; 12:45-47).

No, Christ did not lie. He laid down his life for the sins of man and made salvation easy.

It is the religious, sinful, self righteous nature of man that has made salvation difficult and complicated. It is mixing grace and works. It is Laodicean because it is neither hot nor cold.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION

In Revelation chapters two and three the Lord Jesus Christ gave his warning to the seven churches in Asia. The Apostle John was told to write it in a book and send it to the churches.

These seven churches were not cults, as some would assume. Neither were they denominations, as others would assume. They were literal New Testament churches founded on the gospel of Christ.

We know they were New Testament churches because Christ said he was, "in the midst of the seven candlesticks," and the seven candlesticks were the seven churches. (Revelation 1:12-13, 20)

Jesus Christ is not in the midst of a cult church. Neither is a cult called a church in the New Testament. These churches were not modern, man made denominations.

They were not Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Catholics, or any other denominational organization.

To the church at Ephesus Christ said, ***"Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."*** (Revelation 2:4)

To the church at Pergamos Christ said, ***"But I have a few things against thee..."*** (Revelation 2:14a)

To the church at Thyatira Christ said, ***"Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee..."*** (Revelation 2:20a)

To the church at Sardis he said, ***"thou livest, and art dead."*** And, ***"I have not found thy works perfect before God."*** (Rev. 3: 1, 2)

The Lord was pleased with the church at Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11) and the church at Philadelphia. (Rev. 3:7-13)

The Lord told the church at Smyrna they were rich even though they were poor.

To the church at Philadelphia Christ said...
(Revelation 3:8) I know thy works; behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

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Of the first six churches mentioned, only two were serving the Lord in truth. They had done two things; kept the word, and not denied Christ.

Finally, the church at Laodicea was the most unworthy church of all. They were lukewarm; neither hot nor cold. They thought they were rich, but Christ told them they were, **"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:17b).**

The problem with Laodicea, as it was with the churches at Ephesus, Pergamos, Thyatira, and Sardis was their message. That is the reason for the warning.

To every church Christ said, "I know thy works..."

Ephesus had left their first love. Pergamos had the doctrine of Ba-laam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. Thyatira had the doctrine of Jezebel. Sardis had begun to lose what they heard in the beginning.

Finally, the church at Laodicea had completely lost its message. They were at the point where they had shut Christ out of their message. He was outside the door.

THE LOST MESSAGE

The message these churches had lost was the simple gospel. The first love at Ephesus was the simple gospel of Christ.

The doctrines of Balaam, the Nicolaitans, and Jezebel, cloud the gospel with mixed messages.

The works of Sardis were not perfect before God because they had mixed a works righteousness with the simple gospel.

The message at Laodicea, if there was any message at all, was lukewarm. The Lord said, "I will spew thee out of my mouth."

One of the most un-spiritual churches in the New Testament was the church at Corinth. They were so far away from the truth Paul had to remind them of the gospel. (1 Corinthians 15: 1-4)

THE GOSPEL

According to the Bible, the Word of God, the gospel is that Christ died, was buried, and rose again for the forgiveness of sin, to those who believe in Christ.

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Most Bible scholars agree that these seven churches were not only literal churches at the time of the writing of Revelation, they also represent seven types of church doctrine, and seven periods of church history.

These seven periods of church history begin with the church of Ephesus during and at the end of the apostolic age, and ending with the Laodicean church, the church at the rapture.

The church of Laodicea will be the New Testament church of Christ reigning at the time Christ takes his church home.

When Christ comes for his church a lot of people are in for a surprise. There will be many who sit in the pew of the Laodicean church who think they will go to heaven but will be left behind.

There will also be many who are taken with the church at the rapture that most thought would be left behind.

WORKS

Christ said, "I know thy works." To the church at Ephesus Christ said, "They left their first love, and repent and do the first works."

To the church at Pergamos he said...

(Revelation 2:19) I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Pergamos had a first and a last works; the last to be more than the first.

(Revelation 1:20) The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

When John saw the glorified Christ, he saw him in the midst of the seven candlesticks, which were the seven churches. The word candlestick comes from the Greek word ***luchnia***, which means to illuminate, or a light.

The word angel is a Greek word ***aggelos***, which means messenger. The word is often translated into the English word angel. In any case, it means messenger.

The church is supposed to illuminate and be a light. It is the messenger that spreads the light.

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Every saved, born again, Christian is supposed to be a messenger of the gospel. (Acts 1:8; Romans 10:14, 5)

The light we are supposed to bring is the glorious light of Christ. Satan would like to keep that light from shining in the minds of men. (11 Corinthians 4: 4-6)

It is the gospel that reveals the Savior of God, Jesus Christ the Lord. The church is supposed to be a light, and we are supposed to be the messengers.

Jesus Christ is the true light, (John 1:4-9; 1 John 1:5) and the gospel, if preached and believed, reveals that light. Christ knows if his church is busy spreading the light.

The church at Ephesus left its first love; the simple gospel of Christ. The doctrines of Ba-laam and the Nicolaitans were slowly creeping into the message, and it did in Pergamos.

Thyatira allowed Jezebel, a prophetess, to seduce the church into fornication, and eat things offered to idols. We do not know exactly what it was they were doing, however, if they were eating things offered to idols, they were probably doing the offering.

(Revelation 3:4) Thou hast a few names even in Sardis that have not defiled their garments...

"Even in Sardis." Yes, as hard as it was to believe, there were even some in Sardis that held on to the truth of the simple gospel. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

HISTORY

The church has survived, and will survive, until the Lord comes to take his church home. Not one church member will be left behind.

Roughly two thousand years have passed since the church was founded on the day of Pentecost.

We have survived the apostolic church of Ephesus, the worldly church of Pergamos, and finally, the lukewarm church of Laodicea.

The lukewarm church is the church of Prominence today. It is not a denomination, it is doctrine, it is a teaching, and it is the message. The message reveals the church.

The Lord Jesus Christ was well aware of man's shortcomings, of his hypocritical, deceitful, idolatrous, and unfaithful heart.

The Bible calls it sin; the old nature. We were born with it, and it still haunts every one of us.

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Therefore, we have the New Testament. It is the word of Christ divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit. Throughout the New Testament are warnings to the saved, born again, child of God.

To the church at Rome...

(Romans 6:1) What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

(Romans 6:2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer in it?

There are many other warnings throughout the book of Romans. (Rom. 6:12; 7:14-24)

Then, of course, there is the church at Corinth. The most rebuked church in the New Testament.

In his first Epistle to the Corinthians Paul constantly reprimanded their actions and lifestyle.

In 1 Corinthians 1:10-11, Paul said he heard there were divisions and contentions among them.

In chapter 3:1-4, Paul told them they were carnal and babes in Christ.

In chapter 4:14, Paul told them, ***"I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you."***

To the church at Galatia Paul said, ***"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"***

The church at Galatia had forgotten the simple gospel of Christ. They had been "bewitched" by a lie. It is always the deeds that become the doctrine.

In Ephesus the deeds of the Nicolaitans had become the doctrine of Pergamos. The doctrine is the message. The word doctrine in the Greek means teaching.

Galatia had been bewitched with a false doctrine, which became their teaching, which is their doctrine, which is their message. A church is founded on their message. If the message is false it is a lie. The word of God is never a lie. If the doctrine does not agree with the word of God it is a lie.

(John 17:17) Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

(John 17:19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Jesus Christ said the word of God is truth and it sanctifies. Nobody is sanctified through a lie.

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The foolish Galatians were bewitched by a lie. It seems as though we are bewitched by a lie. We take the truth and mix it with a lie and expect to be sanctified.

Therefore the warning to the seven churches!!

Five of the seven churches in Revelation received a severe verbal spanking from the Lord. The two that did not were given a warning to hold on and not fail.

Finally, the church at Laodicea, which was a literal church, and a type of church doctrine throughout history, will be the state of the church when Christ returns at the rapture. It will be lukewarm. It will have a watered down message. The gospel will have no effect.

At Corinth they were so fouled up Paul had to declare the gospel all over again. Unlike the church at Galatia, which had perverted the gospel, and were bewitched with a lie, the Corinthians had completely forgotten the gospel.

They were saved by believing the gospel, and now, had forgotten it.

(1 Corinthians 15:1-4) Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and in which ye stand;

By which ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures;

Paul the apostle did exactly what every Christian is supposed to do. Declare what we have received.

Imagine being so wrapped up in religious observances that we forget the gospel.

I knew a man once who attended church faithfully most of his adult life. He was a deacon. He was an occasional usher.

His mother and brothers attended church. He heard the simple, clear gospel every Sunday.

One Sunday morning, after everyone was seated, just before the service, he caught me outside

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the front door and asked me how to tell someone how to be saved.

Of course I told him how easy it was, yet, it seemed to me if he was saved, and wouldn't he know how to be saved?

Perhaps he was like the Corinthians, and believed in vain. A person who believes in vain is a person who believes just because he is supposed to. He believes without being able to prove what he believes.

He believes because it is the social thing to do. He still believes, but it is in vain.

The latter day church will have a message that is lukewarm.

We are living in the Laodicean church age.

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THE GREAT SIN

Almost every month, or at least annually, all across the country, men of different denominations gather together for prayer breakfasts or prayer something or other.

At these gatherings we have Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Pentecostals, and so on.

During the meeting these preachers shake hands, compliment each other, praise one another, and generally beam with pride because they are accepted as one of the group.

Most of the time at these gatherings they have a guest speaker. He is generally one of the accepted groups.

However, consider the following fictitious scenario. Suppose they fouled up and picked the wrong man to speak.

Suppose this man is a little different and does not fit the mold of the generally accepted group. He probably doesn't light up with pride as he mingles with the rest of the men and women gathered there.

He would probably not play the huggie kissee lovie dovie role as the others do.

As a matter of fact he feels a little out of place and slightly uncomfortable. He even wonders why they chose him to speak. He's a little younger than most of the men and he has never really associated with any of them.

Yet, he gives the Lord the credit for this opportunity and can hardly wait to speak, and just slightly nervous.

He knows exactly what his message will be. Until then he tries to fit in as best he can, but it is not easy.

He can also see that those gathered there seem to be wondering who he is and how he was chosen to speak.

After all, each person here looks forward to speaking on these occasions. The reason is obvious; it's a chance to make an impression on their peers.

Finally, the announcement is made and the young preacher is introduced. He walks to the podium with mixed emotions.

He wonders how he will be accepted. Actually, he knows!

He thanks them for the invitation and the introduction. He begins with the phrase "God hates sin and I hate sin."

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THE GREAT SIN

There is an Amen from every corner of the room. He continues with..."The trouble with our country and society in general is sin." There is another Amen, even louder than the first. He is accepted and he knows it.

He looks around the room and continues. "It's nice to see so many different men and women from different denominations getting along so well."

Everyone seems to be a little more relaxed now. Even though they did not know him, or who invited him to speak, he seems to think like they do.

He briefly glances around the room and asks..."How many do we have from the Lutheran Church?" He gestures by raising his hand. Some hands are raised.

"From the Baptist Church?" More hands go up. "I also see the Catholic Church is represented. How about the Pentecostal and the Methodist Church?" Once again hands are raised.

He continues. "I imagine other denominations are present also." He pauses briefly. "Yes, its true, God hates sin. As a matter of fact he shed his blood on the Cross for sin."

"Every Sunday we preach from our pulpits the terrible sin of abortion and homosexuality and many other social ills that plague our nation and our world.

Yet, even though these are terrible crimes and a sin against God, they are not the sin that plagues our society."

They look a little perplexed at that statement. They all know very well these are the sins that hold back God's blessings from all of us.

"Even though, according to statistics, there are thousands of abortions performed every day in this nation alone, that is not the most grievous sin against God."

They glance at one another. Surely he is going to say that homosexuality is the sin. Or maybe drugs?

"Homosexuality, random murder, adultery, and many other perversions, are terrible crimes against a holy God. They are not however, the sin that plagues our society. The Bible says these things are a sin and even an abomination against God.

Yet, all these things are not the one great sin that plagues our society, our government, and our personal lives."

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By now they looked completely bewildered. They were even murmuring among themselves. What could that sin be?

He has covered everything. They were going over every known sin they could imagine. What could be worse than these?

He opened his Bible!

"From Jeremiah chapter two verse thirteen."

(Jeremiah 2:13) For my people have committed two evils; They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.

He looked up from his Bible. "This is the great sin that plagues our society today and it is committed by the New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the sin of false doctrine. The sin that comes running on its heels is the sin of compromise. It is the sin committed by everyone in this room today."

He could see they were beginning to become angry with him, and he expected it. We are not sinners they thought. We have a loving and understanding attitude.

Before they had a chance to rebel, and maybe even throw him out, his voice grew louder and commanded attention.

"The church has committed two evils. We have forsaken the fountain of living waters, the Lord Jesus Christ, by hewing out broken cisterns of false doctrine that does not hold water. We have taken the simple gospel of Christ and mixed it with so much works; we have become the lukewarm church of Laodicea.

And then we have added the insult of compromise, and everyone in this room is either guilty of false doctrine, or compromise, or both. It's the message!"

He was amazed; they seemed willing to listen. Perhaps each one thought they were right and the others were about to be condemned.

"The homosexual and the abortionist can be saved by trusting in Christ as their Savior. The murderer and the drug addict can be saved by faith in the finished work of Christ.

We make it hard for society to be saved with our message we proclaim from our pulpits."

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Then he shocked them.

"I see the Baptist and the Pentecostal and the Methodist and the Lutheran and the Catholic and the other denominations, who do not agree on doctrine, having fellowship with one another, and dining with one another, as though you were brothers and sisters in Christ.

Which one of you is right? You preach in your churches about truth, yet none of you agree on doctrine. Who has the truth? Which of you is right? You cannot all be right. If you were, the Bible would be a fouled up mess.

You hypocrites! You compromising hypocrites!

There was silence. They knew he was right. The Baptists preach against the doctrine of other churches they do not agree with. The Pentecostal preaches against the Catholic.

The Catholic church claims to be the one true religion, but they are all gathered together as one.

"There is only one truth," he said. "You cannot all have the truth and disagree.' God's people have committed two evils."

Of course this is just a fictitious scenario. It is true that people of different denominations gather together all the time, for many different reasons, and many different situations.

The majority of the time, when they gather together, it is of their own choice.

When they do, it is hypocrisy. Not any two of these different churches agree on Bible doctrine. The Bible is the authority and has the first and last word. There is only one truth on every doctrine. There cannot be two or three different interpretations on any doctrine.

Our imaginary preacher probably will never exist because he would have to be able to offend people without the worry of being accepted. There are no more Paul the apostles.

Also, if he did exist, he would not be invited to the party because he would not be accepted anyway.

Note: This writer knows how that works.

For that reason we did not know how to end the story. We did not know how he would be accepted and what their reaction to him would be.

Jeremiah 2:13 was written to the nation of Israel. They were God's people in the Old

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Testament. However, they were saved by the same gospel that saves anyone in the New Testament. (Ref. Galatians 3:6-9; Hebrews 4:1-3)

It is the same Christ who paid for their sins as well as ours. We are all saved by faith in the same Savior. That has not changed, and neither does the warning.

Jesus Christ is the fountain of living waters. Israel had forsaken him and went after false religion, false gods.

(John 4: 13-14) Jesus answered, and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again;

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

(John 7:38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Jesus Christ is speaking of the Holy Spirit which every Christian receives when they trust Christ as Savior. (Ref. John 7:39)

When we trust Christ as Savior we receive the well of water, which is our guarantee of eternal life.

A hewed out, broken cistern holds no water. It is not eternal. It comes from false doctrine which is a lie. A lie is not the truth. ***THEREFORE, THE TWO EVILS!***

This writer believes we are probably living in the Laodicean church age because the gospel message has been perverted and twisted so that it is not recognizable. It is lukewarm.

(Galatians 1:6-7) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel,

Which is not another; but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

The gospel of Christ has been under attack since the beginning of time. The church at Galatia had those within the church who were perverting the gospel.

This was one of the first churches founded by the apostles after the pentecostal experience in

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Jerusalem, which was the founding of the New Testament church age.

This should be frightening to the members of the body of Christ because things have not changed in two thousand years.

Please notice the warning from Paul the apostle to those who pervert the gospel of Christ. ***(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.

Let him be accursed if he preaches any other gospel than that gospel preached by Christ and his apostles.

Remember, Paul proclaimed the gospel to the Corinthians who seemed to forget it.

The gospel is that Christ died, was buried, and rose again for the forgiveness of sin to those who believe. (Acts 13:38-39; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

Many times over the Bible says simply believe in Christ! (John 3:15-16, 36; 5:24; 6:29, 35, 47; Acts 16:31)

Our church leaders, along with each individual Christian, needs to evaluate his gospel message. Is it on "Thus saith the Lord," or is it on thus saith some man, or denomination.

Are we preaching what we have been taught? We believe that is the problem. We take for granted our pastors and leaders have been giving us the right doctrine. We do not take the time to "prove the Scriptures."

Paul told the Philippian jailer to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31)

Did Paul lie to the jailor, or is it that simple. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "Verily, verily. I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

Did our Lord Jesus Christ lie to us, or is it that simple. According to our churches it is not that simple.

Because of man's desire to serve the Lord with perfection, he has become un-perfect. We have

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committed two evils. We have forsaken the fountain of living water (Jesus Christ) and we have hewed out broken cisterns (of false doctrine) which do not hold water.

The remainder of this book will be devoted to exposing what we consider the broken cistern of a work's righteousness.

These works, when added to the simple gospel, is a perversion of the gospel of Christ.

We urge the reader to read carefully and then study to see if these things are so. (Ref. Acts 17:11)

NOTE: The inspiration for this chapter began long ago after reading the book (***Hebrews - Twenty Six Simple Studies in God's Pattern for Victorious Living*** by Dr. M.R. DeHaan, M.D.) We are deeply indebted to Dr. DeHaan and his insight into the doctrine of the first and second rest of salvation and service.

False doctrine usually follows a misunderstanding of Bible doctrines. Because man is a religious animal with a desire to establish his own righteousness, he misunderstands the righteousness of Christ. Therefore, Bible doctrines are misrepresented and perverted.

(Matthew 11:28-30) Come unto me, all ye that labor 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.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

The labor in Matthew 11:28 is man working at religion in order to please God and find his way into heaven; trying to work his way to heaven. It is a work's righteousness.

Christ said it is, "labor and heavy laden." He also said, "Come unto me... and I will give you rest."

The "rest" Christ offers is salvation. It is eternal. It begins the very instant we trust Christ as our Savior. It is free, without any kind of work.

Christ did all the work at Calvary on the Cross. (John 5:17, 20, 36; 9:3-4; 10:25, 32, 37, 38)

CHAPTER THREE

SALVATION AND SERVICE

At Capernaum the multitude of people found Christ and asked him a question.

(John 6:28-29) Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

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

The Lord's answer was that they believe on him.

(John 6:47) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

"I will give you rest." Salvation is easy. There is no work involved. It is by simple faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is absolutely free. (Ref. Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

In Matthew 11:29 the Lord said, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Wait a minute! Didn't the Lord just say in verse 28 to, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."

Now he is saying to, "take my yoke upon you... and find rest."

Isn't a yoke a sign of work?

Did we not see that salvation is free without any work? Isn't believing in Christ all the work we needed?

What did the Lord mean by, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me... and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

The answer is our service. He means our service to him. Salvation is free without any works. Our works are our service for Christ after we are saved.

Unfortunately, most people cannot make a distinction between the two, and consequently, the gospel is perverted.

In Matthew 11:28, the Greek word for labor is **kopia**, and it means to feel fatigue, toil, and to be weary.

The Greek word for laden is **phortizo**, which means to overburden with spiritual anxiety.

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SALVATION AND SERVICE

Working my way to heaven is toil, fatigue, and an overburden of spiritual anxiety. When is it enough work if I work my way to heaven? I could never be good enough, or work hard enough, to make it.

However, the Greek word for yoke is **zugos**, which carries the idea of coupling together, and servitude. It also means an obligation.

A yoke is the instrument used to couple two animals together for work. For instance, one ox is harnessed to an oxbow. Two oxen are harnessed together by a yoke.

When we serve Christ, and take up the yoke, we are coupled together with him. We could not serve him otherwise. We could not serve without taking his yoke upon us.

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me..."

How do I serve Christ? We begin by learning of him or learning about him. How do I learn about him? Bible study! Bible study! Bible study!

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

What is it I should study? The Bible! The Bible is the word of God. Christ is the Word. (Ref. John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; 5:7)

When I study the Bible, which is the word of God, I learn about Christ, who is the Word.

***(11 Timothy 3:16-17) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.***

Studying the word of God prepares us for service. It gives sound doctrine, reproves, corrects, instructs in righteousness, that those who serve are perfected and furnished unto good works.

Unfortunately however, many do not heed 11 Timothy 2:15 when they study the word. They do not rightly divide the word. They do not separate between salvation, which is free, and service, which is my works.

Not everyone who trusts Christ as their Savior will serve him. It is sad but true. There are many

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SALVATION AND SERVICE

who will regret their Christian life when they stand at the judgment seat. Yet, they will have the joy of heaven, just a loss of rewards.

For those who do desire to serve the Lord, it is not easy. Satan will always attack those who serve Christ. There are hurdles and obstacles. It takes faith to serve. We could not serve otherwise. When the problems arise we need to have faith in the presence of Christ.

(1 John 5:13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

"These things." These things are the Bible. John said he wrote them to those who believe on the name of the Son of God. That is salvation, and it is free.

"So that ye may know ye have eternal life." As I study the Word of God, it proves itself to be true and accurate. The more I trust and rely on the word of God, the Bible, the more I trust and rely on the living Word, Jesus Christ.

"And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." It takes faith to serve Christ. The more we learn of him, the more we may serve him by faith. We learn he is the only true friend in time of need. We learn he is the one who keeps us saved.

These things, the Bible, are written to those who believe in Christ, so they may know they have eternal life, and believe on the name of the Son of God. We must repeat ourselves concerning this verse.

This author calls this verse the circle of faith verse. We, who believe in Christ, study the word of God so we may believe in Christ. The more we study the Bible, the more our faith is increased. The more our faith is increased, the more we believe in, trust in, the word of God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first rest is salvation, which is free, and the second rest is the rest of service, which means taking the yoke of Christ, and working with him.

It is impossible to serve Christ without learning to trust him when opposition comes in our Christian lives.

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The book of Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians to remind them of the failure of their ancestors to serve by faith.

It was an exhortation to serve and enter into the second rest of service. The writer of Hebrews was aware of their failure to serve.

Anyone who is saved by faith in Christ and does not serve is in the same peril as the Old Testament Hebrew children. In Hebrews chapter three they are reminded of their fathers who fell in the wilderness because of their lack of faith.

When Christ mentioned the first and second rest in Matthew 11:28-30, he was specifically talking to Israel.

Even though Christ was talking to Israel, he is also giving the same illustration to the church.

Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years because they would not serve by faith. They could have entered Canaan, which is the land of blessings. Canaan is not a type of heaven, as some would presume; it is the land of promise to those who serve by faith. It is the second rest.

(Hebrews 3:18-19) And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believe not.

So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Israel was told to enter Canaan and inherit the land. They were told the Lord would give it to them and drive out their enemies.

(Deuteronomy 1:32) Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God.

Because of their failure, the Lord would not allow Israel to enter Canaan. (Ref. Deuteronomy 1:19-40)

Therefore, we are to take the yoke of Christ and enter the second rest. It begins by learning of him. As we learn of him, our faith is increased which gives us the ability to serve.

(Hebrews 4:1-2) Let us, therefore, fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

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We may hear the gospel, just as the Hebrew children, and be saved, but there is no profit if we do not serve by faith.

(Hebrews 4:9-10) There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

That is the first rest of salvation. It is ceasing from our own works, and trusting the finished work of Christ.

(Hebrews 4:11) Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

It should be easy to see that this is the second rest of service. It means labor. Salvation is free without any works (labor). Service is taking the yoke and going to work for Christ.

(Also read Hebrews 4:3-8)

We will never enter the land of Canaan without taking the yoke of Christ, and learning of him, and serving by faith.

We may wander in the wilderness, as many Christians do, it is our choice.

CHAPTER FOUR

GRACE AND WORKS

Because man is naturally a religious and self righteous animal, he will confuse salvation and service, which mixes grace and works.

He will claim to believe that salvation is free without any works, then, turn right around and add something to the simple gospel.

We all know how to quote Ephesians 2:8-9 or Titus 3:5, which says... "***Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...***"

We hear people quote these verses, and claim to believe in them, yet continually pervert the gospel with some kind of works.

That problem followed Paul everywhere he went. There are always those who will say, "We believe in salvation by faith in Christ ... BUT!"

Beware of those BUT'S!! It means we are going to pervert the gospel of Christ with a work of some kind. (Ref. Acts 15:1-5)

Because people cannot distinguish between salvation and service, and grace and works, the gospel, as presented by Christ and the apostles, is non existent.

Not only is the gospel perverted, passages like 11 Timothy 2:11-13, Hebrews 6:4-6 and James 2:17 are completely distorted.

How often we hear saved Christians quote James 2:17 in an effort to judge another's works, and therefore, judge their salvation.

We hear statements like "If you're not doing something you are not saved? Or, "They have been in church for years and do not have a ministry, they cannot be saved."

Is that how we judge a person's salvation? It should not be.

(John 7:24) Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.

The Greek word for judge in this verse means to form an opinion, to determine. How do I form an opinion, or make a judgment? By righteousness! The Word of God!

We form an opinion with the Word of God. In other words, we do not form an opinion concerning a person's salvation by our perception of their lifestyle. If we want to know if a person is saved or lost we ask them.

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I have heard men, who are supposed to be sound in the doctrine, quote James 2:14, 17, and 24 in an attempt to judge another's salvation by judging their works. I have also heard men of cult religions quote the same verses in order to support a works righteousness.

(John 6:28-29) Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

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

Salvation is by belief, trusting in, Christ the Savior. That is the first rest. That is the only work we need for eternity in heaven.

(Matthew 7:20) Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

We have often heard people quote this verse in order to determine in their own mind if a person is saved or lost.

They look at a person's lifestyle, which they consider the fruit, and make a judgment concerning their salvation.

If we do that, it becomes a works righteousness. We judge them according to their works. Once again, the only way to judge is according to the word of God.

Therefore, we need to take a closer look at Matthew chapter seven.

(Matthew 7: 15-16) Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

(Matthew 7:20) Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.

By their fruits! Whose fruits? The false prophet. This verse **does** not tell us we will know a Christian by their fruits.

It states that we will know a false prophet by his fruits. What fruits? Is it his appearance? No!! He looks like a sweet little, cuddly, furry, sheep. He is the kind of person who will be accepted into the fold because he looks like a sheep.

Yet, inwardly, he is a ravening wolf. He will devour, rip, shred, tear, and literally destroy the church if he has a chance.

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"Beware of false prophets." BUT HOW WILL I KNOW?

Unfortunately, many people will never know because they cannot judge according to the word of God. They judge the outward appearance. They judge what they consider their good works.

Does a thorn produce a grape? Does a thistle produce a fig? No! An apple tree produces an apple. A cherry tree produces a cherry.

A false prophet produces another false prophet. How does he or she do that?

By their message!! A false message produces a false message, and a false prophet produces a false prophet. The fruit of a false prophet is another false prophet.

Likewise, a Christian should produce another Christian by their message. If a Christian has the wrong message he will not bare any fruit. If the child of God is influenced by the false prophet, his message will be influenced, and he will bare fruit for the false prophet.

Beware of false prophets! Ye shall know them by their fruits. Ye, Christians, shall know them by their fruits.

Can we judge a Christian by their fruits? Actually, yes, as long as we do not judge them by their outward appearance.

We judge them by their fruits, which is what they produce. What they produce is according to their message. The message should produce another Christian.

False prophets abound in the Christian community, and within the New Testament body of Christ.

(Hebrews 13:15-16) By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

The Lord Jesus Christ expects us to communicate. As we do, we share the gospel with the world. This is the fruit of our lips.

It is the message. The message of a saved Christian bares fruit if it is the right message. The fruit it produces is another Christian.

Therefore, we may know a Christian by his fruit. It is not his lifestyle, or his appearance we

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should judge, it is the message and the fruit it produces.

Unfortunately, many saved Christians do not have the discernment to judge righteous judgment.

(Revelation 1: 16, 20) And he had in his right hand seven stars; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength.

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Jesus Christ stood in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. (Rev. 1:12-13)

These seven candlesticks are the seven churches of Revelation chapters two and three.

These seven churches represent seven types of church doctrine. A church doctrine is what it believes and teaches. It is their message.

Jesus Christ is in the midst of the seven churches. He is not in the midst of a cult church.

NOTE: Our definition of a cult church is one that denies the deity of Christ, salvation by grace through faith, and the rapture of the church. If a church organization or denomination denies anyone of those three things they are not part of the New Testament body of Christ.

Christ is in the midst of the seven churches and he is holding in his right hand seven stars, which are the angels of the seven churches.

Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword. The sharp two-edged sword is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12)

The stars are the angels of the seven churches. The Greek word for angel means messenger. The angels of the seven churches are the messengers.

The message they are supposed to bring is the simple gospel of Christ. It is the sharp two-edged sword of the word of God.

The message we are supposed to bring is the simple gospel of Christ. If we pervert the gospel with works we dull the edge of the sword.

The very first church mentioned in Revelation chapter two, the church of Ephesus, left its first love. The first love at Ephesus was the simple gospel of Christ.

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However, Christ did praise Ephesus for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans. The Greek word for Nicolaitans means overcomers of, or, victorious over the people. False doctrine overcomes the people of the church when it infiltrates sound doctrine.

Yet, those deeds of the Nicolaitans in Ephesus became doctrine in Pergamos. Pergamos also held the doctrine of Balaam. The "way of Balaam," (11 Peter 2:15) "the error of Balaam," (Jude 11) and "the doctrine of Balaam," (Revelation 2: 14) is the progression of the teaching of Balaam in our churches. It is the progression and conclusion of false doctrine in a church.

Balaam tried to bring a curse on those God would not curse. (Numbers 22, 23, 24) It is a type of using the truth for financial and personal gain. It is they who "loved the wages of unrighteousness."

The throne of Satan was also given acknowledgement by Christ to Pergamos.

Thyatira had been seduced by one who Christ called Jezebel and he also likened Thyatira to "the depths of Satan."

Finally, the lukewarm church at Laodicea; the final progression of the present day body of Christ. We have become the lukewarm church of Revelation

We have watered down the gospel with so much works it is amazing anyone can be saved in our present age.

"My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me... and hewed out cisterns... that hold no water."

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(Acts 7:43) Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Molech, and the star of your god, Rephan, figures which ye made to worship; and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

In Acts chapter six, seven men were appointed to conduct the business of the new church. This would allow the apostles to go about promoting and preparing the word of God. (Acts 6:1-7)

One of the men they chose was a man by the name of Stephen. He was a Grecian Jew, which some call "Hellenist."

Stephen was a powerful Christian who was strong in the faith, and a testimony for Christ.

Because of his knowledge, and the Holy Spirit, the unsaved could not win an argument with him. (Acts 6:9-10)

Finally they hired some men to bring a false accusation against Stephen, and brought him to trial before the Jewish council. (Acts 6:11-15)

As he stood before the council, the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these things so?"

Instead of the usual defense one might bring. Stephen begins an account of the history and origin of Israel.

Naturally, he begins with God's choice of the Father of Israel, Abraham.

He gave an accurate description of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt until their failure to obey God in the wilderness.

He ended by pointing out that they had Christ crucified. (Acts 7:2-53)

Stephen also pointed out that Israel had "received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." (vs. 53)

That was the last straw. No self righteous, respectful person wants to hear they have broken the law of God.

Especially anyone who believes they are going to heaven by obeying the law, or not sinning. With that, they had Stephen stoned to death. (Acts 7:54-60)

Any reasonably knowledgeable Bible student knows that Israel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar into Babylon.

After seventy years of captivity they were given their freedom and allowed to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and their temple. (Ezra and Nehemiah)

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However, what did the Lord mean by, "I will carry you away beyond Babylon?"

We need to remember some things about typology in the Old Testament. (See appendix in back of book.)

Egypt is type of being lost without Christ. After I am saved out of Egypt by faith in Christ, I have the opportunity to serve Christ by faith. However, if I continue living a life that does not reflect my new life in Christ, I may receive a spiritual spanking from the Lord.

Even worse, I may become super religious. In an attempt to please God, or please my own religious vanity, I may establish some kind of a works righteousness. This is false religion if it is not founded on the word of God. God calls false religion Babylon.

Israel was a type of the church. They were put in the wilderness, which is a type of the Christian testing ground.

From there, if I serve Christ by faith, I may enter Canaan, which is a type of blessings for service. It is the present day land of promise. It is the second rest of Matthew 11:29-30.

It begins by taking the yoke of Christ and "learning of him."

Canaan is not a type of heaven as some would assume, it is a type of my present day service for Christ.

In Canaan, Israel had to fight battles. They were plagued by the Philistines. They had to till the ground. The Amalekites were there also. Israel had to build, plant, work, and all the other things we will never have to do in heaven.

However, the first generation that came out of Egypt failed to enter Canaan, the land of promise, because of unbelief, or lack of faith. (Deuteronomy 1:6-46)

Because of that failure, the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. (Numbers 14:20-38)

Finally, after forty years, the next generation of Israel entered the promised land of Canaan. (Joshua 1-3)

When Moses sent twelve men, from the twelve tribes of Israel, to search the promised land, only two were faithful.

God had already promised the land. He said go and possess it. Israel did not believe God. Joshua and Caleb were the only two who had enough faith in God to take him at his word.

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(Numbers 20:36-38)

Two men out of the whole nation of Israel. Compared to the church today that sounds like a fair percentage.

Someone may ask, "What has all of this to do with the Laodicean church age?"

The Bible answers that question. The entire book of Hebrews was written to exhort the born again Jew to serve Christ by faith. In Hebrews they are reminded of the failure of their fathers and the consequences.

We are told that these things are written for our example and admonition.

(1 Corinthians 10:11) “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. (Ref. 1 Corinthians 10:1-15; Hebrews 3: 1-19)

Finally, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, God allowed the nation of Israel to enter the promised land.

Israel remained in the land for roughly 900 years until they were carried away into Babylon.

After seventy years of captivity God allowed Israel to return to their land. However, Israel has never had a peaceful moment.

In our present age, which we call the age of grace, or the church age, Israel is set aside and Christ is calling out his church.

The Lord has not forgotten Israel, neither has he ignored them. But Israel is reaping the rewards of the seed they planted.

It is the same seed being planted by the church of Christ, and we will reap the rewards.

Please allow us to repeat ourselves once again. Captivity is being held prisoner; either in slavery or for some other reason. Israel was held captive in Egypt, which was a type of being lost without Christ.

They were saved across the Red Sea, which is a type of being saved by the blood of Christ when we hear, and believe the gospel, which is the word of God.

Israel was taken captive by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Babylon is a type of mixing error with the truth. It is mixing grace and works.

The present day New Testament church is guilty of mixing grace and works. It is still Babylon

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and it is still captivity.

We are in bondage to false religion. We condemn the so called cult religions, while we are guilty of the same thing.

Concerning Israel and their doctrine Paul states...

(Romans 10:1-4) Brethren, my hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

Our churches today have a zeal for God. We acknowledge that. However, it is not according to knowledge. In an attempt to appear righteous, we have perverted the gospel.

Israel was carried beyond Babylon, and is still there today. They have been scattered across the face of the earth, while they wait for the Lord to set up his kingdom. (Ref. Isaiah 10:20-22; 11:11-16)

In 1948 Israel became a nation once again. Yet, they are not back in their land today. They are still scattered across the four corners of the earth.

Why? "My people have committed two evils!!!!"

We, the New Testament church, the body and the bride of Christ, have committed the same two evils. We have forsaken the Lord and hewn out broken cisterns.

We have forsaken the fountain of living waters, the Lord Jesus Christ, by perverting his gospel.

When we pervert the gospel, we are guilty of hewing out broken cisterns that hold no water.

Salvation becomes a works righteousness which will not work. We have hewed out broken cisterns.

Also, concerning Israel, who is the branch, Paul states...

(Romans 11:20-21) Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by Faith. Be not thou high minded, but fear;

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For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.

Israel was cut off because of unbelief. What was it they did not believe? They did not believe in salvation by grace through faith alone.

The warning Paul gave was, "thou standest by faith," and "Be not thou high minded, but fear;" and, "take heed."

The Christian will never lose his or her salvation. If they could, God would be a liar, and he is not.

However, we may lose our blessings and the protection of God. We stand in danger of not entering Canaan, the land of promise.

We may go into captivity and bondage of Babylon, which is being in bondage to false religion. Christ said it is labor and heavy-laden.

Even worse, the church may be taken beyond Babylon. Personally, this writer believes we may already be there.

(Isaiah 65:1-7) I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, that walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts;

A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrifice in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick;

That remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments; that eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels.

That say, stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Behold, it is written before me; I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

Your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord, who have burned incense upon the mountains and blasphemed me upon the hills; therefore will I measure their former work unto their bosom.

That is the result of false religion. We become "holier than thou." It is a smoke in the nose of God, and rebellion.

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It provokes a holy God to anger continually. It is bondage and captivity to a lie. It is Babylon.

In Isaiah 1:9-20 God condemns Israel's doctrine. He compares them to Sodom and Gomorrah. (vs. 9)

He asks, "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me," and, "who hath required this at your hand?" (vs. 11-12)

God calls their religious activity vain oblations, new moons, and appointed feasts. He tells them it is an abomination and an iniquity. God said he cannot bear it, it is a trouble to him, and his soul hated it. He was also weary of bearing, or putting up, with it. (vs. 13-14)

By now we believe we have made our point. There are various kinds of sins man may, and will, commit against God.

However, it should be easy to see, the gravest sin we can commit against God is perversion of his Holy Word. Being religious may not be proper worship and it may even be a lie.

It is no wonder God said to Israel he would carry them away beyond Babylon.
At the present time in history the beloved nation of Israel is set aside temporarily.

Until Israel is re-gathered in the kingdom, God is calling out his church.

However, the church is in danger of being carried beyond Babylon. We have made the same mistakes Israel made. We have followed the same example.

We have religious observances. We have a holier than thou attitude. We have a works righteousness. We have perverted the gospel of Christ.

We are guilty of committing two evils. We have hewn out broken cisterns and forsaken the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Revelation 3:14-16) And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot, I would thou wert cold or hot.

So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

The present day church is neither cold nor hot. The simple gospel of Christ has been perverted

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with so much works it is neither cold or hot. It cannot be identified. Take heed!!!

CHAPTER SIX

REPENT AND BELIEVE

In the following chapters we will examine what we believe to be the present day message of the Laodicean church age. It is neither hot nor cold.

We know that most every pastor and preacher will reject what we have to say, yet, we know it is true, and it is the reason for many of the problems that plague our society today.

According to the gospel message of today, either Christ lied or he did not tell the entire truth. However, being God, we do not think for one second that Christ lied, or that he could lie.

(John 3:14-16) And, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up,

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

In the gospel of John the words believe, believest, believeth, and so forth, are used roughly 100 times. Most of the time they are a direct quote from the Lord Jesus Christ.

(John 6:47) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

These are the words of Christ. It is the simple message of eternal life which is attained by faith in the finished work of Christ on the Cross.

The word believe, translated from the original Greek word, πιστεύω, (pistevo) means to entrust, to have faith in, or to put my trust in.

Salvation is by putting my trust in Christ. In Acts 16:31 Paul told the Philippian jailor to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

Did Paul tell a half truth?? Is it that easy?

According to the gospel message preached today, that is not all there is to it. We are told to repent, confess, say the sinner's prayer, walk an aisle, take the Romans road, and etc.

Who is right? Was the Lord right? Was Paul right? Or are our modern day preachers right?

Is believing on the Lord Jesus Christ enough, or must I do something else? After all, we are told, your not serious about your salvation unless you make some kind of an outward expression of your faith.

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We are told however, that believing is not enough. We must repent. Then we are led to believe that repent means to turn from sin.

If that were true then salvation would become something I would do in conjunction with the work Christ has done.

It would not be enough just to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." I would also have to turn from sin.

If turning from sin had anything to do with my salvation it would become a works righteousness.

The word repent does not mean to turn from sin, or as some people ignorantly assert, turn or burn.

There are two words translated repent from the original Greek text we need to look at. The one is used in connection with salvation and the other is used in connection with our service.

The true meaning for both words is to change the mind. In neither case does the definition mean to turn from sin. However, turning from sin is part of the process of the change in my life, if I serve, after I am saved.

(Mark 1:14-15) Now after 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, and believe the gospel.

Christ said to, "repent and believe the gospel." If repent means to turn from sin, then we must certainly heed the words of Christ, and turn from sin and believe the gospel.

However, the word is translated from the Greek word μετανοέω (metanoeo), and it means to change the mind.

The word simply means to change the mind. Christ said to, "change your mind and believe the gospel."

NOTE: This definition is from the Greek, English Dictionary, by Prof. Karl Feyerabend, Ph.D. Copyright 1918, by David McKay, printed by David McKay Company, Philadelphia, PA.

The Strong's Concordance defines the word as to think differently, or afterwards. It also states the word means to feel compunction. (nothing about turning from sin)

When we hear the gospel, we should repent, change our mind, and believe in Christ. We should change our mind about the fact that we have sinned, we need to be saved from our sin,

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Christ has provided a way to be saved, and we need to believe in him as the substitute for our sin.

When we repent, change our mind, we are realizing our destiny is eternal hell unless we trust Christ to deliver us from hell into eternal life in heaven with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

In chapter one, on page nine, we quoted 1 Corinthians 15:14. As we have already stated, the church at Corinth had the gospel so fouled up, Paul the apostle had to declare the gospel once again to this mixed up group of people.

They were so involved in speaking in tongues and idolatry; they had completely lost sight of the simple gospel.

Paul told them they were ignorant, babes in Christ, divided, and carnal, just to name a few of the problems they had.

It is a sad thing when we have to declare the gospel to the New Testament church of Christ

Part of the gospel message is that, "Christ rose again according to the scriptures."

We are to change our mind about who Christ was and what he did. He was God in the flesh. He rose from the grave proving that he was God and could forgive sin. Only God can forgive sin.

He rose from the grave, therefore, guaranteeing that those who believe in him will also rise again.

The word repent in connection with salvation is always to change your mind. Our modern day preachers, in order to see an outward appearance, or some indication they have done their job, always pervert the gospel with some kind of a works righteousness.

No! Repent does not mean turn from sin. It does not mean to quit sinning in order to be saved.

The other word repent translated from the Greek is the word μετάνοια (metanoia), and it means a change of mind that would show a change. It does not mean turn from sin.

However, it does mean we should show a change if we are already saved. This word has to do with our service. If we are to serve Christ we need to represent our new life in Christ.

(Matthew 3:8) Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance.

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In this verse, John the Baptist saw the Pharisees and the Sadducees come to his baptism. (vs. 7) Knowing they were legalists, false prophets, and hypocrites, he said to bring forth fruits meet for, befitting, repentance.

In other words, he was saying, if you changed your mind (metanoeo), and are really saved, then show it by your change of mind (metanoia), and bring forth fruits that would show your change of mind.

The Greek word used in Matthew 3:8 is the word metanoia, and it has to do with our service.

The Pharisees and Sadducees were the religious leaders of Israel. They were the examples. When it came to sinless perfection, they could not be outdone.

If turning from sin could save anyone, they were saved. However, turning from sin will not save us, and it is ignorant to even suggest it could.

Outwardly, the Pharisees and Sadducees were as pure as the driven snow. Inwardly, they were ravenous wolves. (Matt. 7:15)

Like all self righteous people, they were judgmental of others. (Matthew 7:1-5; Luke 18:9)

Those who mix the doctrine of turning from sin with believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are Pharisees and Sadducees. They are judgmental and legalistic and like those religious leaders of old, are probably not even saved themselves.

Salvation is a free gift by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; there is nothing I must or can do. (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5)

When it comes to our sin, we could not stop sinning even if we wanted to. We sin even after we are saved. Show me a person who says they do not sin, and I will show you a Pharisee.

Sin is our nature. We will sin until we die and leave this sinful body. The only sinless person who ever lived was Jesus Christ. That is how he could pay for sin; the just for the unjust. (1 Peter 3:18)

(1 John 1:8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

The apostle John is speaking to saved children of God. If we say we have no sin, we deceive

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ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Those who believe they stop sinning have deceived themselves and the truth is not in them.

(11 Corinthians 7:10) For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

This verse has been quoted by those who hold the view that repentance is a requirement for salvation. They assert that we must feel sorrow for our sin, and turn from sin, and be saved.

However, this verse was written to the church at Corinth by Paul the apostle. They were already saved. Paul had written them a letter admonishing them for their lifestyle. The letter was a verbal spanking. It had nothing to do with getting saved; it had everything to do with their service. (11 Corinthians 7:7-12)

It is foolish to even use these verses as salvation or gospel messages. These words were written to a group of people who were supposed to be saved and serving God.

If our sins could be washed away by our own efforts, we would have no need of the sacrifice and the blood of Christ.

Repent, (change your mind about everything) and believe.

Does Christ want us to sin? Of course not! Only a fool would believe and teach that. Do we teach people to sin? Of course not! However, everybody believes that.

When we preach that a saved person will sin, we are accused of promoting and condoning sin. Everybody believes we teach people to sin.

The fact is we teach that only Christ was sinless. It is impossible for a human being to be sinless, even after salvation.

Are we expected to strive for perfection? Yes we are. The New Testament was written to exhort the born again child of God to strive for perfection, and be an example.

However, when we fail, and we will, we are told to keep trying and keep going.

Paul wrote about the old nature. It will never leave us until we leave this earthly, sinful, body. (Romans 7:7-25)

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John wrote about the old nature and sin. He told us how to overcome sin. We go to Christ with our faults and he intercedes for us. (1 John 1:6 - 2:2)

Turning from sin has nothing to do with being saved. Trusting Christ alone has everything to do with being saved.

For more information on this subject read...

What Happened To the Word Believe by Donald H. Bunge - Donald H. Bunge 12406 Westwood Lane Omaha NE 68114.

Repentance by Curtis Hutson from the Sword of the Lord.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ALTAR CALL

In chapter six we examined the use, or rather the misuse, of the word repent in the present day salvation message.

Many claim the word repent means to turn from sin. They say one must repent and believe in Christ.

In other words, before one can be saved, they must turn from their sin, and believe in Christ as their Savior.

If that were true, salvation would become a work's righteousness. It would depend on some act on my part. The blood of Christ would not be enough; I would then take part of the credit for my salvation. After all, I did repent. I did turn from, or gave up my sin, before I believed.

Because of that false message, many people will never be saved. They are led to believe they must turn from their sin and believe. Because they think they have some sin they may not be able to give up, they will walk away from salvation.

On the other hand, there are those who honestly think they are saved because they turned from, or have forsaken, their sins, along with faith in Christ.

Another thing we add to the gospel is the altar call. Men will go to great lengths to defend their position on coming to the altar as part of the salvation process.

Nowhere does the Bible mention an altar call. There is not even a hint that anyone must walk to an altar in order to be saved.

We hear things like, "leave your sins on the altar." Or, "leave it all on the altar."

Personally this writer has seen many altars, yet we have never seen anyone's sins lying on, or around the altar. We ask people to come down the aisle and ask Jesus to save them.

Once again, many people will never be saved if they believe that is part of the salvation process. There are some people who are just too shy to be in front of a crowd, or be noticed.

They may be ashamed of the way they are dressed, or they may be embarrassed for a variety of reasons.

In any case, walking an aisle, or making an altar call, is a false message. It is not Biblical, and it is not part of the gospel message.

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Every altar is man made. It is nothing more than wood, metal, carpeting, and a little dirt the vacuum sweeper left behind.

Yet we will never find the blood of Christ, the Cross of Calvary, or any man's sins at the altar.

The only sin we find at an altar in any church is the sin of perverting the simple gospel of Christ.

The one who is guilty of that sin is the preacher. It may be the pastor of the church, or an evangelist, or a guest speaker.

Whoever mixes the gospel with works is guilty of the gravest sin we can commit. It is the sin of two evils. It is forsaking the Lord Jesus Christ, and hewing out a broken cistern that holds no water.

It makes the gospel lukewarm. Christ said he would spew it out of his mouth.

Many years ago, according to the story, a famous preacher spoke in a large church in Great Britain. At the end of the service he said, "If anyone has any questions come forward at the end of the service."

Years later it was said he regretted that event because of the outcome. We are not sure that is the reason people walk all aisles today, but the idea did come from somewhere.

(Matthew 13:1-2) The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside.

And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

The greatest preacher of all time is preaching to the largest crowd of all time, in the largest church of all time. (outside)

He is in a ship just offshore, and a large crowd is gathered on the shore.

When he is through with his message does he ask anyone to come forward? If he did a lot of people would have drowned.

Why can't we follow the example of Jesus Christ? He never asked anyone to do anything but believe on him.

Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. It seems he and the apostles were the only ones who knew the difference between grace and works, between salvation and service.

A lot of people are drowning in their sins because we add works to the simple gospel message.

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The reasons, or rather, the excuses, given for coming down an aisle, or the altar call, are varied. As we have already stated, some say they are not really serious about their decision to trust Christ unless they come forward.

They must make some sort of an outward expression. They must face the congregation or the pastor. The new convert must show his real intention or he or she is not really saved at all.

Years ago this writer attended a service at a Baptist church in Perry, Ohio. As soon as they discovered I was a first time visitor they singled me out.

I was a young man at the time and very emotionally distraught. I was withdrawn, and afraid of being noticed in public.

I was very insecure, and could probably be classified as even cowardly.

At the end of the service I was asked to stand and be recognized as a new visitor. I was completely embarrassed.

I wanted to run out of that place and never attend another church service as long as I lived.

Two of the deacons took me by the arms and led me to the front of the church and asked me to make a commitment to Christ.

I was then taken into a small room at the front of the church and told I was in need of mental help and Christ would solve all my problems if I allowed him to.

You could almost say it was at the point of harassment. I was totally confused, embarrassed, and even a little angry at their overbearing attitude.

I walked out of the church just as lost as I went in, and even more lost if that is possible.

One of the members would come to visit me on occasion and bring his guitar. He would sing hymns, especially the ones "his dear old mother used to love."

I hated those visits, and could not wait for him to leave. He never gave the simple gospel. It was always, "you need Jesus," or something similar.

I wanted to know the Lord. I searched for that relationship, and even had two dear friends who were pastors. I would force myself to attend their services, and sit in the back row hoping I would not be noticed, or even talked to.

After five years of floundering around trying to be and act like a Christian, even thinking I was one, a miracle happened.

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I met a young lady and we were married. That is only part of the miracle. Ironically, she attended the church that (I thought) had treated me so harshly.

I went with her to church and sat in the car the first two Sundays. "I'm not going in there," I said. "I don't like those people."

Finally, I mustered up the courage and sat in the back row as usual.

During the service no one bothered me, yet they were friendly. At the end of the service I heard something I had never heard before.

If I did hear it, it never registered. It was the simple gospel message without any strings attached.

What was different this time? It was the man and the message. It was a different pastor with a different attitude, and the right message.

He used a wallet to make an illustration. He said, "If you do not know if you are going to heaven if you die, there is a chance you are not going."

Then he gave the clear gospel. Christ died and rose again for the forgiveness of sin. Christ shed his blood on the Cross to pay for our sins. All we have to do is believe in Christ.

Then he said, and he made it very clear, "With every head bowed, and every eye closed, if you are trusting Christ as your Savior just raise your hand. No one will see it. No one will bother you. No one will drag you down the aisle. You don't even have to raise your hand. No one will see it but me."

I raised my hand that day and knew I was saved. From that time on I began to learn and enjoy the Bible. And I often thank God for that dear man who gave me the simple gospel and made it easy for me to be saved.

I would just as soon dance the two-step with a water buffalo in a poison ivy patch than pervert the gospel and make it difficult for people to be saved.

After a period of time another miracle happened. I overcame my emotional problems. Actually, the Lord did it for me. Now there is no one I am afraid of and I know no strangers. The biggest miracle of all is that I am a preacher.

Is there a chance I may have heard the gospel before and did not realize it? Yes, of course! Maybe I was so afraid I would be asked to do something that I did not allow it to sink in. All I know is, it was a real joy when I found out how easy being saved really was.

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As I began to witness for Christ, I made note of various responses I encountered.

I remember on one occasion I asked a man if he knew if he was going to heaven when he died. He said, "Yes I am."

"That's great," I replied. "May I ask how you know that?"

"I went to the altar in my mom's church," was his answer.

"Is that how you are getting to heaven?" I asked.

He answered abruptly and with slight indignation, "Yes, I went to the altar in my mom's church."

Unfortunately, this man was not saved at all. He was led to believe he was saved because he went to the altar. He may have heard the gospel, but because it was mixed with man's works it had been lost.

After taking the time to explain the gospel, and being careful not to offend his mother and her church, he trusted Christ as his Savior.

This man could have awakened in eternal hell some day in complete shock. He thought he was saved because he was asked to do something that completely blocked out the simple gospel message.

How many countless others will awake in eternal hell who thought they were going to heaven because they walked an aisle or went to the altar?

Is it possible some who walk an aisle are saved? Yes!! But only if they trust Christ as their Savior. If they believe the altar had anything to do with their forgiveness, they are probably not saved.

My feet cannot save me. I could walk around the world a dozen times and it would not save me. It would be a noble act. I would receive a lot of recognition. My name would be put in the book of world records. My feet and legs would be worn out. I would probably need a whole bunch of joint operations. But it would not save me.

In the following chapters we will discuss some of the verses people use to drag folks down an aisle. As usual, it is a simple matter of mixing salvation with service. When we mix salvation with service, we are mixing grace and works.

In Acts 16:30 the Philippian jailor fearing for his life, fell down before Paul and said, "**Sirs,**

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what must I do to be saved?"

In verse 31 the reply was, ***"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."***

If any of the apostles could use one of the phrases we use today they might say, "Keep it simple stupid!"

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There are a variety of phrases and slogans we use in connection with salvation. Some of them are...

The ABC's of salvation...

The Romans road to salvation...

Salvation made easy...

We usually see these slogans on the front of tracts that are designed to attract attention. The hope is that someone will read the front cover and be interested enough to read the inside.

The idea is good; however, the inside will either be confusing or contradictory.

One of the slogans used to condone the altar call, or walking the aisle is the ABC's of salvation.

A. Admit you are a sinner. This we will agree with. Admitting I am a sinner is the same as repent. When we repent we are changing our mind about the fact we are guilty of sin. (Romans 3:10, 23)

B. Believe in Christ as your Savior. This we will also agree with. When we admit we are sinners, and trust Christ to forgive our sin, we are repenting; changing our mind about sin and our need of being forgiven.

C. Confess Christ openly and in public. If you do not, you are not saved.

NOTE: Some say you must confess your sins. We will discuss this later.

Once again the simple gospel is misrepresented by the inaccurate interpretation of a few verses. Those verses are usually the following: Matthew 10: 32-33; Luke 12:8-9 and Romans 10:9-10. And sometimes the following: 1 John 2:22-23 and 4:2, 15.

If confessing Christ or confessing my sins has anything to do with becoming saved, or forgiveness of sin, I will be the first one to preach that message.

However, if it does, then once again, Christ did not tell the whole truth. We know that Matthew 10:32-33 are the words of Christ, yet, he left out the first part of the message, which is, "whosoever believeth in me."

As we have already stated, if confession has anything to do with people being saved, we want

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to be the first to make that part of our message.

If it is not, we would rather bronco bust a bareback porcupine than preach a lie.

We hope the reader will prayerfully consider the following line of argument.

(Romans 10:9-10) 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.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

We will agree that on the surface it may sound as though confession is part of the salvation process.

However, we do not believe it is and we also believe the Bible proves that after careful analysis.

We must have people confess Christ with the mouth in order to be saved. Is that what this verse states? It does seem to suggest as much.

In Romans chapter ten, Paul the Apostle is making his address toward the saved Jew. In verse one Paul states he would like to see every Jew (Israel) saved.

Israel seemed to think the law is what made a person righteous (vs. 2-3).

Paul states that it is Christ, and belief in him that gives righteousness (vs. 4).

Then Paul says it is by the preaching of the word, the gospel that gets people saved (vs. 5-8).

Paul was dealing with the same problem we have today in the church. People will not preach the gospel because they are afraid they will offend people and will be rejected.

The saved Jew will not preach the gospel because they are afraid of offending their family and friends.

As a matter of fact, when a Jew accepts Christ as their Savior, their family has a funeral for them and considers them dead.

They are not allowed in the synagogue and are alienated from family gatherings and functions.

A good example is found in John chapter nine. Christ healed a man who was born blind. The man was taken before the Pharisees, who were the religious leaders, and questioned.

They were trying to find fault with Christ so they could discredit him.

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Finally, after getting nowhere with the blind man, they called his parents before the council of Pharisees. The Pharisees did not believe, or rather, did not want to believe that Christ could heal. If he could, they would have to accept the fact that he was not just an ordinary man.

(John 9:19) And they asked them, saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind? How, then, doth he now see?

We are not trying to be impertinent, yet, the parents were literally between a Rock and a hard place. The hard place was the Pharisees and the image the parents would have liked to maintain of themselves in the community.

The Rock was the one and only Jesus Christ.

The parents assured the religious leaders this man was their son, and he was born blind, but how he received his sight was beyond them.

They lied! They knew who healed their son.

(John 9:22) These words spoke his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already that, if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

The parents were afraid of the Jews. They were afraid of the consequences of confessing Christ.

In Romans chapter ten, Paul was saying that the Jew would not be saved unless you saved Jews would confess Christ and preach the gospel.

Nothing has changed in two thousand years!!!!

The Christian today is still between a Rock and a hard place. He is concerned about what others will think of him and his responsibility with the gospel of Christ.

The book of Romans was not written to the lost, it was written to those who were already saved. It was written concerning their responsibility with the gospel.

Romans chapter ten was written specifically concerning the preaching of the gospel by those who are already saved.

Romans chapter ten was written to the saved, born again, child of Christ.

On the other hand, it seems when we do preach the gospel of Christ, we get it all fouled up with our own man made works.

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We add our own righteousness, exactly the way Israel did. We should heed the warning of Romans 10:1-3.

We ask that the reader use a little logic, a little common sense, and be open-minded.

Romans 10:9-10 are both two part verses. We repeat!! They are two part verses.

Romans 10:9-10 have to do with salvation and service.

(Romans 10:10a) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness...

The question should be... "is a person saved at this point?" Are we saved when we believe with the heart unto righteousness? Yes or no?

(Romans 10:4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.

Where does my righteousness come from? It comes from Christ. He gives us his righteousness when we believe in him. It is called faith.

(Romans 4:3) For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

What did Abraham believe? He believed the gospel of Christ. (Ref. Galatians 3:6-9)

Abraham believed the gospel and God counted unto him for righteousness. He received the righteousness of God. Abraham was a sinner just like you and I. But because he believed in the gospel, the righteousness of God was imputed unto him.

(Romans 4:4-6) Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.

According to these verses it should be easy to see that righteousness comes from God by faith. Faith and believe are exactly the same thing.

Faith is counted for righteousness. Believing justifies the ungodly. God imputes righteousness without works.

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Nowhere in these verses does it say to confess anything.

(1 Corinthians 1:30) But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;

(Philippians 3:9) 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;

Righteousness is of God by faith. It is a gift which is imputed by God when we believe his word which is the gospel.

We are not only given the righteousness of God, we are sanctified and redeemed. (Also see Hebrews 11:7)

Romans chapter ten has nothing to do with our becoming saved. It has everything to do with others being saved because we confess Christ.

Confessing Christ is our service!!

Why can we not make the distinction between salvation and service? It becomes a works righteousness every time we mix salvation and service.

The reader may not like to hear this but when we use Romans 10:9-10 as the gospel message, we are mixing grace with works which makes the gospel lukewarm.

Lukewarm means neither hot nor cold. Does that sound familiar? It should. That is what Christ told the church at Laodicea.

(Romans 10:11) For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

If we believe that Christ died for us, and have faith in him, we should not be ashamed of him. If we are not ashamed of him, we should confess him. If we confess him, others may be saved.

That is our service for Christ. That is the yoke of Matthew 11:29-30. It is the second rest of service. It is not the first rest of salvation, which is free. The second rest will cost something. It is our work. It has nothing to do with our getting to heaven. It has everything to do with somebody else getting to heaven.

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(Romans 10: 13-14) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Is it not just plain logical that these verses were written to those who were already saved. It is an exhortation to serve Christ by faith.

How shall they hear without a preacher? So go and preach the gospel to someone who is not saved.

How shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? How will they hear unless we, as saved children of God, confess Christ with our mouth?

It is our reasonable service!!!

Would it not be easier to preach the simple gospel? Why not tell people they are sinners and they need to trust the finished work of Christ for forgiveness? Why not tell them they will receive eternal forgiveness and a home with Christ for eternity?

Why not tell them it is a free gift without any works whatsoever?

We preach a gospel of grace apart from works and then we turn right around and add works because we do not know the difference between salvation and service.

(Romans 10:17) So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

This is the sum of the whole thing. "Faith cometh by hearing." (read also Philippians 2:9-11)

Why not use John 3:15-16 or John 6:35, 47 or Acts 16:31?

Why use the word repent at all when most Christians, and even preachers, do not even know the meaning of the word?

Why tell people to confess Christ as part of the salvation process when we really know that is not true?

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CONFESSION cont.

In the gospels we see Christ offering the kingdom to Israel. John the Baptist proclaimed the "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2)

Since Christ was and is the King he was offering the kingdom to Israel. They rejected their King and temporarily lost their kingdom.

In Matthew chapter ten, the Lord sent his twelve disciples throughout Israel proclaiming the kingdom of heaven at hand.

(Matthew 10:5) These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter not;

It is important to note that Christ told the twelve not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans.

(Matthew 10:6-7) But go, rather, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

They were to go and preach the kingdom at hand. They were also sent to preach the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is the same gospel we preach.

Had Israel believed the gospel, and accepted Christ as their Messiah, (Savior) they would have received their King and the kingdom.

However, as we all know, they rejected Christ, and the kingdom is put on hold.

(Matthew 24:14) And this same gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The same gospel, the gospel of the kingdom, will be preached during the seven year tribulation. At the end of the seven year tribulation Christ will set up the kingdom of Israel. The only way to enter into the kingdom is by faith in Christ. Faith in Christ comes by hearing and believing the gospel.

The Lord sent his twelve disciples out to preach the gospel to Israel and offer them the kingdom. They were not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans.

(Matthew 10:32-33) Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess before my Father, who is in heaven.

But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in

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heaven.

These verses are used to make people confess Christ publicly along with their faith in Christ. We ask them to walk an aisle or say the sinner's prayer and confess Christ openly. If they do not we say they are not saved because Christ said he would deny them before the Father.

First of all, we cannot use these verses in our churches today because of some very important issues. We must remember to consider the whole context. We must never take a few verses and build a doctrine around them. When we do that it almost always builds false doctrine.

We cannot use Matthew chapter ten to force people into public confession for the following reasons:

Christ sent the twelve disciples to the nation of Israel only. He told them not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans. It was a dispensational event. He was offering the kingdom to Israel.

However, the most important thing we need to remember is that Matthew chapter ten is the instruction to the servant, to the disciple.

In other words, it is not the instruction given to the lost on how to be saved; it is the instruction for one who is supposed to be saved already.

Notice also that these twelve were sent forth with special powers. They were to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons. (vs.8)

NOTE: We know a lot of false preachers who claim to heal the sick and cast out demons, yet, not one claims to be able to raise the dead. You either have all the power or none at all.

If we use Matthew chapter ten verse 32 and 33 to force people into public confession, then we need to use the whole chapter.

There are many who use these verses and do not believe in the power to heal the sick and raise the dead and cast out demons.

It is hypocritical the way we manipulate Scripture.

(Matthew 10:5a) These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying...

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Matthew chapter ten is a commandment to the servant, not the lost. Although, there are many, we must admit, who seem to be serving but are lost.

Nevertheless, it is not a commandment to confess Christ for salvation; it is a commandment to confess Christ after we are saved.

In particular, it was a specific commandment to the twelve. They were to go to Israel, not the Gentiles or the Samaritans.

We know that many would like to split hairs concerning these verses, therefore, let's split some hair.

If we use these verses to make people walk an aisle or confess in public, then no one in the audience should be a Gentile or a Samaritan.

Also, it is interesting to note, that the disciples were not to take any money, nor scrip, (a bag for carrying things) two coats, shoes, or even a staff.

A staff would be a staff, which most people think was used primarily as a walking stick. The staff was generally used to fend off wild animals they might encounter.

The scrip, or bag, sometimes translated wallet, was used to carry provisions. The staff helped on rough terrain, and was almost a must for protection.

However, they were to take none of these things. If it became cold, they were not to have any extra clothing, not even shoes.

This would certainly make it difficult for the evangelist who travels from church to church preaching. Or one who travels from church to church as a candidate.

One coat! That would be rough in Alaska in the middle of January. Big Macs are out of the question without a purse full of money.

We could probably overcome that by staying at the Y.M.C.A. Of course there is always the food pantry or soup kitchen.

Better yet, we could do all of our preaching in Hawaii, and stay in the vicinity of a fruit farm.

Or, we could carry money and extra clothing if we need it, and use simple logic concerning Matthew 10:32-33.

It was written to the servant.

(Matthew 10:24) The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

CHAPTER NINE

CONFESSION cont.

(Matthew 10:26a) Fear them not...

Almost any fire and brimstone preacher can stand in the front of the church and use the name of Jesus.

However, when we get out into the public, how many of us will confess Christ to the guy with twenty four inch biceps and a tattoo of a viper on his arm?

The Lord sent his disciples to their brethren, the fellow Jew, and said, "Fear them not."

(Matthew 10:32-33) Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, who is in heaven.

But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, who is in heaven.

The Father, who is in heaven, would like to protect and bless those who confess his Son before men. The Father is not obligated to give anything of his kingdom to anyone who does not deserve it.

If we serve Christ, and confess Christ, so others can be saved, Christ will confess us before the Father. Why? For divine protection and blessings.

Matthew chapter ten is instructions to the disciple. Notice the following...

Vs. 16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves...

Vs. 17 But beware of men...

Vs. 18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake...

Vs. 22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake...

Vs. 23 But when they persecute you...

Vs. 26 Fear them not, therefore...

Vs. 31 Fear not, therefore...

We have nothing to fear if nobody knows we are a Christian and a disciple. If we do not confess Christ, nobody knows we are a disciple.

Matthew 10:32-33 and Romans 10:9-10 are not verses to be used as part of the gospel message. They are written to the disciple.

CHAPTER NINE

CONFESSION cont.

They are written to encourage us to confess Christ and preach the gospel, which is simply, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved."

NOTE: Ironically, both Matthew chapter ten, and Romans chapter ten, are written concerning the Israelite and their attitude toward the gospel.

(11 Timothy 2:11-13) 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.

Once again, it should be easy to see the difference between salvation and service. These verses have nothing to do with becoming saved, or as some would assert, that we may lose our salvation.

On the contrary, these verses have to do with our service.

In verses one through ten of 11 Timothy chapter two, we see Paul using terms that were designed to exhort and motivate the child of Christ.

He says, "be strong in the grace..." (vs. 1) "Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Christ." (vs. 3)

Paul said, "to strive," and "to labor." (vs. 5, 6)

What did Paul mean when he wrote, "if we deny him, he also will deny us?" Am I really saved when I trust Christ as my Savior? What if I deny knowing him like Peter did? Can I believe he died for my sins and then die and go to hell because I denied him?

If we deny him, it is because we are not serving him, and that is usually because we are ashamed of him. Therefore, he will deny us before the Father for divine protection, blessings, and answered prayer.

Paul reminds us that we cannot lose our salvation. In verse 11, Paul states we are dead with him; therefore, we shall live with him. That is the promise of salvation. It is future and eternal.

However, we live in the here and now. We are obligated to serve him and confess his name before others. If we do not confess him, he is not obligated to confess us before the Father.

CHAPTER NINE

CONFESSION cont.

The saved Christian may even fall so far as to be in a state of unbelief. Yet, Paul said Christ is still faithful. He cannot deny himself. (vs. 13)

Simply put, Christ, who was God in the flesh, cannot lie. He promised eternal life to whosoever believes in him. He is the faithful one.

Because he abides faithful, our eternity is sealed. Our future life is in his hands.

However, our present life is really in our hands. That is, will we confess Christ so others may be saved?

The church at Laodicea was neither hot nor cold. It had nothing to do with the weather. The furnace and air conditioner work just fine, it is the message.

Nothing has changed in two thousand years. It was, and it still is, the message.

When we mix works with the salvation message, it becomes lukewarm. Works always has to do with our service. It is the yoke of Matthew 11:29. It is the second rest of Matthew 11:29 and Hebrews 4:11.

Salvation is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is by belief. Believing is part of the thought process.

Will we ever get it right?

CHAPTER TEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN?

Do Christians sin? Can a person be a saved born again child of God and still sin? The answer is yes!!

Over the years, when we tell people that Christians still sin, whether they want to or not, we hear a variety of replies.

The one response we hear most of all, and the one that is most verbal, is..."Don't tell me people can sin and still go to heaven. "

"Don't tell me people can sin and still go to heaven!!"

Ironically, the ones we get that reply from, are generally Bible ignorant, or they are not even saved.

Often times we get that reply from those who are living a life of total sin, and they seem to think they are not.

(1 John 3:9) 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. (Also ref. 1 John 5: 18)

If we take this verse by itself, without further study of the word of God, it certainly sounds like a Christian cannot sin.

As a matter of fact, this verse states that whosoever is born of God cannot sin.

(1 John 1:8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

It should be easy to see that there seems to be a contradiction between these two verses. However, since the Bible is the word, and God's word is perfect, there must be an explanation.

1 John 1:8 tells us that we deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin, and the truth is not in us. Therefore, we must sin occasionally. That is the reason Christ intercedes on our behalf.

(1 John 2:1) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

John, just as he did in chapter one verse eight, identifies with the reader. He uses the word we. If we sin, we have an advocate.

The word advocate means called to ones side, legal defense, and counselor.

Jesus Christ is our counselor, and legal defense, when he is called to our side.

CHAPTER TEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN?

(1 John 1:9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus Christ, our advocate, comes to our side the moment we confess our sins. He cleanses us from all our sins, when we confess our sins.

But wait! I thought my sins were forgiven when I trusted Christ as my Savior? Does this mean I might lose my forgiveness, my eternal life, my salvation?

These are legitimate questions and deserve an answer. We hope to answer those questions because the doctrine of sin and forgiveness are very important.

When we trust Christ as our Savior he forgives us our sins past, present, and future. This guarantees two very important things. The first is that I am no longer separated from God by sin.

Since we are born into sin, (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22) and sin makes us short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:10, 23) we do not have access to God the Father. (Ephesians 2:14-18)

Therefore, trusting in Christ the Son as our Savior, gives us access to God the Father. The wall of separation between us and the Father, which is our sin, is broken down.

The second important thing trusting Christ as my Savior guarantees is entrance into heaven. My future life and my home in heaven are guaranteed. They are guaranteed by the blood of Christ and by the indwelling Holy Spirit. (John 14:16-17; Ephesians 1:12-14; Revelation 1:5-6)

NOTE: We call this OUR PAST CONDITION, which is being lost and without God. OUR PRESENT POSITION, which is being a child of God and guaranteed access to God the Father through God the Son. OUR FUTURE TRANSITION, which is a home in heaven in a new body that will never die.

However, being human, and living in the present, which is still a sinful world, we do sin. We will sin. John said if we say we have no sin the truth is not in us and we lie.

Since we have enough problems in this world, we do not want to be guilty of lying about our sins.

CHAPTER TEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN?

There is one reason we all sin. It is the old nature. We were born with it. It will never leave us until we leave this world. It began with the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden.

It is also called the flesh. It is also called the body. As long as we live in this flesh and blood body we will, and we do, sin. (Romans 7:15-25)

Why is it so important to point out the fact that Christians sin? One reason is because of guilt. When we are led to believe that we do not sin, or we cannot sin, and a young Christian finds themselves in a sin, they feel guilt.

Another reason is, they are led to believe by self righteous preachers and church members that if they sin they are not saved. After all, they say, saved people do not sin.

Therefore, they judge and condemn others. By doing so, other Christians are either made to feel guilt, or to doubt their salvation.

The Lord gave a good example of this concept in John chapter thirteen.

After the Passover supper, Jesus laid aside his garments, took a basin and poured water into it, and began to wash the disciple's feet.

Of course, Peter, not knowing what the Lord was up to, objected. (John 13:6-8) His objection was that the Lord should not lower himself to washing feet.

The Lord's answer to Peter was, "if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

(John 13:14-15) If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I do.

What is the example? Should we wash one another's feet? If we did, what would it accomplish? Do we need to build a doctrine, or a church around washing of the feet?

The answer is found in verse ten. However, before we look at the reason for the Lord's example, we need to see some very important things found in these verses.

In verse four Christ laid aside his garments and girded himself. Then he poured water and washed their feet. Then he wiped their feet with the towel he girded himself with.

CHAPTER TEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN?

He is showing them that he laid aside his glory and came down to man. He girded himself and went to the Cross. At the Cross he shed his blood, and kept his word, and died for the sins of mankind.

(John 13:12) So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

After Christ died on the Cross, he was buried, and rose again and finally ascended into heaven. With his ascension into heaven, he assumed his royal position he rightly deserves, (taken his garments) and sat down at the right hand of the Father.

(John 17:4-5) I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

Jesus Christ the Lord, gave up his glory, laid aside his garments, girded himself, and went to the Cross for the sins of man.

After the Cross, he resumed his glory, took his garments, and sat down at the right hand of the Father.

(John 13:10) Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all of you.

He that is washed is everyone who has trusted in Christ as their Savior. They are cleansed by two things, which are, the Word of God and the blood of Christ. The Lord said they are, "clean every whit," which means completely.

However, he also said they need to wash their feet occasionally, and he gave an example. After he gave the example he took his garments and sat down.

After the Cross, he sat down at the right hand of the Father. He is there today as our intercessor, our advocate. He is there today to wash our feet!!

As we walk through this world and this life, we will step into some sin. Some how, some way, some where, we will sin in one way or another. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

CHAPTER TEN

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When we trust Christ as our Savior, we have a future home in heaven. That is a promise from the Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep his promise. He has sealed it by giving us the Holy Spirit who indwells all Christians. He has also sealed it by his blood and his Word.

However, since we live in the here and now, and we do sin, we must deal with that sin problem. We cannot allow the sin problem to go ignored.

(1 John 1:3) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

Since we are God's children, and God hates sin, in order to have fellowship with God, we need to wash the sin off our feet. How do we do that?

(1 John 1:9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In order to have a right relationship with God the Father, and God the Son, (fellowship) we confess our sins and he will cleanse us from unrighteousness.

There are two things that keep me from having fellowship with God. One is un-confessed sin, and the other is false doctrine. God is truth, and he is light. A lie is darkness.

Jesus Christ is the light because he is truth. God the Father is also light. (John 1:7-9; 1 John 1:5; Psalm 4:5-6; 90:8)

If we say we have no sin, the truth is not in us, and we lie. If we say we do not sin, that is false doctrine. False doctrine is a lie and a sin. They separate me from God.

Does God want us to sin? No, of course not. Any Christian in their right mind does not want to sin. However, the fact is we do sin. We cannot ignore it. If we ignore our sinful nature, or refuse to acknowledge it, we lie and deceive ourselves.

Even Paul the apostle acknowledged his sinful old nature. Then, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote it in the Bible for all to read. (Romans 7:15-25)

(Romans 7:24) Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Who shall deliver me from this body of death?

CHAPTER TEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN?

One of the Roman punishments inflicted upon a convicted person was to strap a dead body to their back. They were to carry this dead body until there was nothing left. They were watched and monitored. (From a distance of course)

When Paul states, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death," the people he wrote the book of Romans to knew the reference.

Paul is saying, my old sinful nature is like carrying a dead, decaying, old body, around on my back. In Romans 7:25 Paul thanks God through Jesus Christ for deliverance.

The word "confess" in 1 John 1:9 means, among other things, to acknowledge. It seems difficult for some people to acknowledge they are sinners by nature.

Why should it be difficult to accept the fact we are not God. Only God is perfect. That is why we worship him. That is why we have faith in him.

That is why we believe he could die on a Cross for the sins of humanity. It is because he is God.

We need to acknowledge the fact we are sinners in order to trust Christ as our Savior. That is salvation!

We need to acknowledge the fact we are still sinful in order to have fellowship with him. That is service!

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN? Cont.

(1 John 3:9) 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? (Also ref. 1 John 5: 18)

We began chapter ten with what seemed like a contradiction. Either Christians sin or they do not. These verses in 1 John 3:9-10 and 5:18 indicate that a Christian does not sin.

However, we know that Christians do sin, and will sin, and we lie if we say we have no sin.

If we compare Scripture with Scripture, the Bible will answer itself.

In a previous chapter we discussed the Christians past, present and future. (pg. 80)

We call this our standing with God. In the past, when I was lost, I had no standing with God. We call this our past condition. In our past condition we are dead in sins. We are dead while we are alive.

After we trust Christ as our Savior, we have a present position. That is how God looks at us now. Even though we are still living in the flesh and blood body, God looks at us in a different way.

He looks at my present position, in light of, my future transition. We all have a future home in heaven with the Lord for eternity. That is my future transition; whether it is upon death, or at the rapture (translation) of the church.

Being born again means just that. I am re-born into the family of God through Jesus Christ.

The context of 1 John is faith, and fellowship. All of this is founded on the truth. (1 John 1:5-8)

John tells **why** he wrote the epistle...

1 John 1:4... "that your joy may be full"

1 John 2:1... "that ye sin not"

1 John 2:8... "a new commandment"

1 John 2:12... "Because your sins are forgiven for his name sake"

1 John 2:13... "Because ye have known him that is from the beginning"

"because ye have overcome the wicked one"

"because ye have known the Father"

2: 14... "because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you"

2:21... "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it"

2:26... "these things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN? Cont.

In verse 26 John tells them one of the reasons for the epistle concerns those who would seduce them. Seduce us with what? False doctrine! False doctrine is a lie. A lie is not the truth.

Love, fellowship, and faith are founded on the truth.

(1 John 2:25) And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

Eternal life is a promise. That is the truth. John, divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote this epistle so we would not be seduced by a lie.

The lie we are seduced with is; if you sin, you are not really saved, or you will lose your salvation. That is a lie!!

God promised us eternal life through his Son. God keeps his promise.

Beginning in chapter two verse 27 through the rest of the book of 1 John, we are assured of eternal life for the following reasons.

1. The Holy Spirit dwells in and abides in every Christian.

Because the Holy Spirit is in every Christian, and he will never leave us. We have the promise of eternal life.

2. The Holy Spirit is the promise of God. (Ref. John 14:16-17; Acts 1:4-8; Romans 8:14-17; Ephesians 1:13-14)

3. The Holy Spirit makes us the children of God. (1 John 3: 1-2)

(1 John 3:9) 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.

Why is it when we are born of God we cannot sin? Yet, we are told that if we say we have no sin the truth is not in us.

Because the answer is..."his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This is our present position in Christ.

Christ looks at us through his blood, and his sacrifice on the Cross. He looks at our future transition and present position.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN? Cont.

John wrote his first epistle to give the reader peace, joy, and faith. Faith in the fact that our future is secure. Faith in the fact that the Lord keeps his word.

1 John 3:9 and 5:18 tell us we cannot sin when it comes to eternal life. That is salvation!! It is a done deal!! It is a promise from God, and it is sealed by the Holy Spirit.

In God's eyes, when it comes to my future glory with Christ, I (we) cannot sin.

(John 5: 18a) We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not...

(John 3:9) 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.

Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin. Why? Because his seed, the seed of God, remains in him. When we are born again, by faith in Christ as our Savior, we become children of God, and his seed is in us. (John 14:16-17; Romans 8:11-17; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; 11 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 1:13-14; 2:22; 4:4-6; 4:30; Colossians 1:27)

If God the Father, and God the Son, dwell in us through God the Holy Spirit, we cannot sin when it comes to our eternal security. We are born again, and his seed remains in us no matter what else takes place.

That is the message John was relating in his first epistle to the church. Take comfort in your salvation. Have joy in your salvation. Do not be seduced by a lie!!

(1 John 1:4) And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

"Write we unto you." The men who gave us the Bible, through the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, did so that our joy may be full.

The Old and New Testaments were written for many reasons, but they should all lead to joy.

(1 John 5:13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Please pay close attention to that verse. I call it the circle of faith. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God." That is salvation.

John said these things were written to the saved, born again, child of God. Those who believe on the Son, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN? Cont.

Then, in the middle of the verse, John tells us why he wrote these things. "That ye may know that ye have eternal life."

If I know I have eternal life, it should bring joy. John proves we have eternal life throughout the epistle.

There is a second reason John wrote his letter, and also most of the New Testament was written for the same reason.

That is for our faith. While we live on this earth we need to have faith. We cannot survive without trusting in Christ.

If we are to serve him, we need to trust him. We need to trust, and have faith in him even if we are not serving.

"These things," the Bible, was written to those who believe in Christ, that they may know they have eternal life, and that they may believe in Christ.

The Bible, the Word of God, if we read and study, will give us more faith. It is a circle. The more we study the more our faith is increased. The Bible proves itself.

This is a salvation and service verse. When we believe in Christ, we are saved. When we study the Bible our faith is increased. That is part of our service. We need to increase our knowledge because that will increase our faith.

We need faith to serve. Without it we will always fail.

Remember what Christ said in Matthew 11:29? "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." That is our service for Christ. Take the yoke of service, and study the Word of God.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Why not? Because his seed remaineth in him. When it comes to my salvation, my eternity, my future with God, my home in heaven, and the promise of God, for those who believe in the Son of God, we cannot sin.

Before we enter eternity, we have to live this life in this flesh and blood body, and we will sin. It is the same blood and the same Savior that paid for eternal salvation, and my daily cleansing.

In God's eyes, when it comes to my salvation, it is sealed, and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CAN A CHRISTIAN SIN? Cont.

The Laodicean church promotes the idea of sinless perfection as a requirement for salvation. That is false doctrine. Nobody but Jesus Christ is, or ever was, sinless, even after we are saved. We are still sinful by nature. We still live in a sinful body.

"Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Jesus Christ did the moment I believed in him. However, in order to shed this body of death, we must leave this body of death.

The only way to do that is by physical death, or at the rapture of the church.

We will never be perfect until we have received our glorified bodies. As long as we believe we are perfect and do not sin, we will pervert the Word of God.

We will always mix salvation with service and the gospel will be perverted. It is mixing grace with works, and that never works.

We continue to mix hot and cold and it becomes lukewarm. It is closing the door to the gospel and Christ. Because of our self righteous attitude within the church, many people go to hell, many of whom could have been saved.

We make it difficult for many to be saved with a confusing gospel message of grace and works. Laodicea!

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Pharisees, religious leaders of the Jewish people, were constantly finding fault with Christ. They condemned and criticized him consistently. Some of the reasons for their actions were jealousy, envy, pride, and authority.

The people were listening to, and following Christ, wherever he went.

The main reason they rejected and ridiculed Christ however, was his message. His message was contrary to their self righteousness. They relished in the respect and admiration they received from their self righteousness.

However, one of the Pharisees, a man by the name of Nicodemus, was beginning to wonder about this man called Jesus. After all, he performed miracles, healed people, knew the Old Testament better than any man, quoted the law of Moses, and people listened when he spoke.

Finally, Nicodemus mustered up the courage to find out who this man really was. He would ask. He would not be blunt, but he would ask. We have the account of that conversation in John chapter three.

Nicodemus said to Christ that he must have come from God. Nicodemus was searching for the truth. The answer he got was a shock to him.

(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.

Nicodemus was hoping to find the King of Israel...

Was this man, Jesus, who performed so many miracles, the long awaited Messiah, the King of Israel? If he was, Nicodemus wanted to know.

The Lord knew what he was thinking. He told Nicodemus he had to be born again in order to see the kingdom of God.

Born again! How could this be?

(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 again?

(John 3:5) Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The first answer to Nicodemus was unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. The second answer was unless a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

The word **see** in verse three is the Greek word eida. (εἶδα) It means to know, be aware, and to behold. Unless a person is born again he cannot behold, or even be aware of the kingdom of God.

It is called salvation!! When we are saved by childlike faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we may now be aware, and behold the kingdom of God.

We have this ability to see the kingdom of God through the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is given to each person who trusts Christ as their Savior.

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

(John 3:7) Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

We cannot see, behold, or even be aware, of the kingdom of God unless we are born again. We must be born again by the water, which is the word of God, and the Holy Spirit.

In Matthew chapter sixteen Christ asked his disciples, "Who say ye that I am?"

Simon Peter answered him and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

(Matthew 16:17) And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven.

Flesh and blood will not allow us to see the kingdom of God, but being born again by the word of God, and the Holy Spirit, will.

How do I see, or behold the kingdom of God? Is it something visible, or something we may touch and feel?

Unfortunately, most of us relate the kingdom of God to a distant place. We think of it as a place somewhere in the heavens. We think because the throne of God is placed in the heavens, and the Lord is sat at the right hand of the Father, the kingdom must be where they are.

Therefore, the kingdom is only attainable by either death or the rapture. In the meantime, we are stuck in this world.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A wise man by the name of Dr. Max D. Younce, once gave his students, of whom I was one, a good definition of the kingdom of God. He said, "The kingdom of God is all things and is moral and spiritual in it's sphere."

The kingdom of God is all things. The kingdom of God is anywhere God is and God is everywhere. We cannot see God because he is spirit. Yet, he still manifests his presence in our lives in one way or another. He is available and so is his kingdom.

(Psalm 103:19) The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.

(Psalm 45:6) Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.

God rules over all things from his throne in heaven. We cannot see him from where we are, yet he rules in the lives and kingdoms of men.

A scepter is a sign of rule, and authority, and law. The scepter of God is a right scepter. That is the righteousness of God.

The word "enter" in John 3:5 comes from two Greek words. They are ***eis***, (εἰς) which means in, and ***erchomai*** (ἐρχομαι) which means to come. Together, they mean to come into.

Jesus said you must be born again to come into, or enter, the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus thought that Jesus might be the long awaited Messiah. If he was their King, then he would set up the kingdom of Israel.

Jesus knew what he was thinking. So the Lord told Nicodemus he had to be born again to see and to enter the kingdom. Nicodemus was shocked. How can this be?

Just like Nicodemus, many preachers and teachers get it all mixed up. They relate the kingdom of God with being in heaven. That is a mistake because it produces false doctrine.

One must be born again to see, or be aware, or behold, the kingdom of God. That is salvation!!! Faith in Christ forgives my sins, and I am baptized in the Holy Spirit, and that gives me the ability to behold the kingdom of God

One must be born again to enter, or come into the kingdom of God. That is service.!!! It is faith that allows me to enter the kingdom of God while I live on this earth.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God is available here and now. "His kingdom ruleth over all."

(Revelation 3:20) Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

The Lord's message to the church at Laodicea was that he was standing at the door, and knocking. The door was closed to Christ at Laodicea. They did not see or enter the kingdom of God.

Many of us today have closed the door to Christ.

Laodicea was a prosperous city. Some of that prosperity filtered into the church. Like most legalistic churches they were pride filled. Like most of our churches today they were judgmental. They, like most preachers today, ignored the kingdom of God. They assumed it was future.

Because they had money, they thought they were blessed by the Lord. They were rich but they were poor. We use 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:21 to judge a persons salvation. The Laodiceans, no doubt, did the same. (We will view those verses in the following chapter)

(Revelation 3: 17) Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

The church at Laodicea was a literal New Testament church founded on the blood of Christ. As in any church, there were probably those who were not saved. They thought they had everything, but they had nothing.

They did not see, or enter the kingdom. They had need of nothing, so they asked God for nothing. They may have thought, just as many do today, that the kingdom of God has to do with my home in heaven.

No! No! No! The kingdom of God is at hand because the King, Jesus Christ, has provided the kingdom for all. The kingdom of God is Canaan for the child of God, it is victory.

Laodicea had a lukewarm, works righteousness, judgmental, gospel message.

In Matthew chapter six the Lord gave what some call the Lord's prayer. Following that, he told how to avoid being anxious, or how to avoid worry. That is not easy in this fast paced society.

In chapter six verses 25 through 32 he tells those gathered there not to worry about food, drink, or clothing. All these things are provided for nature, and the Father knows what we need.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Then in verse 30 he describes the attitude of those listening, and the attitude of most people who read these words.

(Matthew 6:30) Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith.

The kingdom of God is available now to those who are willing to see it. After we see it we have the option of entering it. In verse 33 we are told how.

(Matthew 6:33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Notice, if you will, we are not talking about salvation. In verse 32 he said, "your heavenly Father knoweth..."

He is not our heavenly Father unless we are saved by faith in the Son, Jesus Christ the Lord.

After we are saved we may, or may not see the kingdom. We have the ability to see the kingdom, but, if we focus on the world, and the things of this world, we will overlook the kingdom.

After we see the kingdom, we may enter the kingdom. How? By seeking the righteousness of God.

The kingdom of God is not a place. It will be, some time in the future. It is a state of being. Being in the will of God. Being righteous. Having the right attitude. It is a state of expecting and believing. Expecting good things from God because we believe he has them, and wants to give them to us.

(Luke 11:9,-10) And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

(Luke 12:31-32) But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Fathers good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

(James 1:17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Every good gift is from the Father above. From his kingdom. It is answer to prayers. It is daily provision. It is being able to see and acknowledge from where these gifts come.

(Psalm 84:11) For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

The good things come from the kingdom of God.

Job, one of the greater men of the Old Testament, suffered and lost everything. His wife was ashamed of him and wanted him to die.

However, Job knew where his substance came from, and after his trials were over he was blessed.

(Job 42:12) So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses.

Job had more sons and daughters. He lived a hundred and forty more years. (Job 42:12-17)

Of course, like everyone, Job died. Yet, God gave him many more days of life and much substance.

They all came from the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE THREE KINGDOMS

You may be asking, "What does all of this stuff about the kingdom have to do with the Laodicean church?"

Remember, we began with a look at how false doctrine has penetrated our churches. People have added to the simple gospel to the point that there is no simple gospel.

Why have we done that? It is because man is so judgmental. We seem to think we need to judge everyone by what we see in them, or what we see them do.

Also, mankind is a religious animal. Even the so called atheist is religious in one way or another.

Therefore, because we are religious and judgmental, we have perverted the simple gospel. And, it is also the reason we cannot make a distinction between salvation and service.

We become like Eve in the garden. She defended the word when questioned by Satan. However, instead of just defending the word, in her zeal to be religious, she added to the word. "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it: lest ye die."

Like Eve, we seem to love adding our own little touch to the Word of God. We say, "Being saved is easy." Then, before we are through helping God get it right, there is nothing easy about it.

It becomes, "hath God said?" Then it becomes, "Yea, and he even said some things he didn't even say."

Jesus said, "He that believeth on me hath eternal life." But we know he did not tell the whole truth, did he??

Because of our judgmental, religious, self righteous attitude, we have twisted and perverted the Scriptures so they fit our point of view.

The following is one of those portions of Scripture...

(1 Corinthians 6:9a) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

(Ref. also 1Cor 6: 10; Galatians 5:21)

We will view these verses in their entirety in the following chapter. However, in order to understand their context, we need to understand the three kingdoms.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE THREE KINGDOMS

We have already seen how the kingdom of God is available to those who trust Christ as their Savior. We may see and enter the kingdom of God. Seeing and entering the kingdom of God is a simple matter of serving him by faith, and enjoying the blessings he has to offer.

(Psalm 68:32) Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; oh, sing praises unto the Lord, selah.

Unfortunately, the kingdoms of the earth will not sing praises unto the Lord in this present dispensation.

Very few kings and kingdoms have ever sung praises unto the Lord. The kingdom of Israel did under David, and Solomon, and a few other kings, but just a few.

The United States of America did at its inception. That, however, was short lived, and the United States of America has joined the rest of the world in serving and worshipping the world. The kingdoms of men.

There are really only three biblical ideas of kingdoms. The kingdom of God, which takes in all things, and is invisible unless we learn to see and enter into it.

The kingdom of Israel. Someday this kingdom will literally rule all kingdoms of the earth. Jesus Christ the Lord will be the King of this kingdom. It was the kingdom offered to Israel while Christ was on this earth the first time. They rejected their King and lost the kingdom temporarily. (Ref. Acts 2:34-36; 4:10-12)

The kingdoms of the earth, or, sometimes referred to as the kingdoms of men. These kingdoms are usually doomed to failure.

It is ultimately the kingdom of God that sets up and tears down the kingdoms of men, even though they do not realize it.

(Psalm 103:19) The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Cyrus, the king of Persia, was aware that God gave him his kingdom, and acknowledged it. (11 Chronicles 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2)

The best example of the three kingdoms may be found in the book of Daniel. When Israel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, among the captives were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE THREE KINGDOMS

These four young men would make an impression on Nebuchadnezzar he would never forget. As a matter of fact, the impression they would make, would be written in the Bible forever by none other than Nebuchadnezzar himself.

In Daniel chapter two, it is recorded that king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. He called all his so called wise men to interpret the dream. However, instead of an interpretation, the king demanded that they reveal the dream also. Because the dream was troubling, the king said he had forgotten the dream.

Therefore, he not only wanted an interpretation of the dream, he also wanted the dream revealed.

If the dream and its interpretation could not be revealed, every wise man in the kingdom would be slain. This included the magicians, astrologers, sorcerers, Chaldeans, and Daniel and his friends. (Daniel 2:1-13)

When Daniel heard what was happening he appealed to the captain of the guard, who appealed to the king, and Daniel was given a little time. (Daniel 2:14-18)

Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, appealed to the great King, God in heaven. They prayed.

The Lord revealed the vision to Daniel, and he and his friends thanked and blessed God for answering their prayer.

Daniel and his friends had seen and entered into the kingdom of God. Their lives were in danger. King Nebuchadnezzar threatened to slay every wise man in Babylon if the dream was not interpreted.

Part of the kingdom of God is answer to prayer. Notice the things that come from God in Daniel 2:21-22.

He changes times. Removes and sets up kings. Gives wisdom and knowledge. Reveals secrets. Gives light.

After the Lord revealed the secret to Daniel, he went to Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, and Arioch took him to the king. (Dan. 2:24-27)

Daniel assured the king it was his God who revealed the secret and Daniel was just the messenger. (Dan. 2:27-30)

Then, Daniel revealed the dream and its interpretation to the king. (Dan. 2:31-45)

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THE THREE KINGDOMS

Nebuchadnezzar saw a large, frightening, figure. The head was gold, the arms of silver, the thighs were brass, and the legs were iron.

The feet were iron mixed with clay. Then the king saw a stone that smote the image upon its feet. The feet, and the entire image, were destroyed and blown away by the wind.

The stone became a large mountain and filled the whole earth. (Dan. 2:31-35)

Then Daniel interpreted the dream and explained the meaning. The head of gold was Nebuchadnezzar and the kingdom of Babylon. Then would come the kingdoms of silver, brass, and iron. The kingdom of iron would end with ten toes mixed with iron and clay. (Dan. 2:36-43)

The legs represent a divided kingdom. The toes of clay and iron mean division.

During the days of the kingdom of the ten toes, the God of heaven will set up his own kingdom, which will never be destroyed, and will consume all other kingdoms.

Daniel had a similar vision in Daniel chapter seven. When compared, they reveal future prophetic events.

Following the head of gold, the kingdom of Babylon, would come the arms of silver. This is the kingdom of Medo-Persia under Cyrus and Darius. Then Alexander the Great would conquer and rule the world. Finally, the mighty Roman Empire ruled. Rome represented the legs of iron.

The Roman Empire would be divided in two and finally fall because of division from within. (two legs)

The ten toes will be a sort of a revised Roman empire. This is yet future, and is mentioned in Daniel 7:1-28 and Revelation 17:7-13.

We will not dwell on prophetic events, since this is not a book on prophecy. However, we need to mention just a few things concerning the kingdoms.

When the church is raptured, there will be seven years of tribulation upon the earth. During these seven years, the population will see the one they have allowed to rule their kingdoms.

He will be Satan indwelling a man who the Bible calls the Antichrist.

At the end of the seven years, Christ will judge the nations at the Valley of Megiddo, in a battle the Bible calls Armageddon. (Revelation 16:12-16; 17:14; 19:11-21)

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THE THREE KINGDOMS

Following the judgment of the nations, Christ will establish his kingdom upon the earth for 1000 years. This is the kingdom promised to Israel. Christ himself will rule this kingdom. (Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-34; Revelation 20:1-4)

Jesus Christ is the stone that smote the image to pieces in Daniel 2:34-35 and 45.

During the 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth, the three kingdoms will be visible at one time.

There will be kingdoms of men or earthly kingdoms upon the earth during that time. However, every kingdom shall obey the King of Kings, the Lord Jesus Christ. His law will prevail. (Micah 4:1-5; Zechariah 14:16-21)

Then, of course, there will be the kingdom promised to Israel. It will last for 1000 years. Then there will be a brief cleansing, and new heavens and earth will be established. Then the everlasting kingdom is instituted.

The 1000 year kingdom however, will be inhabited by flesh and blood, and governed by Christ. (Luke 1:31-33)

Finally, we should see the kingdom of God. The reign of Christ will be a time of perfect law and perfect peace.

Since Christ is and always will be God, it will be ruled by God. God will physically rule in the kingdoms of men.

(Daniel 2:36-37) This is the dream, and we will tell it's interpretation before the king.

Thou, O king, art a king of kings; for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.

The kingdom of Babylon, under king Nebuchadnezzar, was given to him by God. It may be given and taken by God.

Everything comes from the kingdom of God, who rules from his throne in heaven.

Every king, and every kingdom, must acknowledge that.

Kings and kingdoms come and go according to the will of God. His kingdom is everlasting. It is visible only if we are looking for it.

Some day in the future it will be completely visible to all mankind.

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THE THREE KINGDOMS

Unfortunately, the very people of God cannot see it because of their focus on the worldly kingdoms.

(John 16:33) These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

In Christ we may have peace. It comes from seeing and entering the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INHERIT THE KINGDOM

It seems we will never learn the difference between grace and works, and salvation and service. When we believe in, put our faith in, Christ as our Savior, we are saved. It is free! It costs us nothing! It cost God a lot of pain.

(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.

We quote that verse in our churches, but we really don't believe it. We use terms like, "If you're really saved you will be doing something." Or, "Christians do not sin."

We quote verses like 11 Corinthians 5:12 where we are told that we are a "new creature," and "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

Therefore, we say, if you are not living a completely new life, and given up all your old sinful ways, you have not become new, and are not saved. Does that sound familiar?

In other words, we are judging their salvation according to their works. It becomes a works righteousness. It should be easy to see the danger of that doctrine.

Years ago I was attending Baptist Bible Institute in Cleveland. When class ended we were filing out of the room, heading for the chapel. I was one of the last people out of the room. One man remained seated, and was in tears.

As I walked by I overheard one of the older men ask him if he was alright.

His reply was that he was in doubt of his salvation.

He thought he had put his trust in Christ. He believed he was saved at one time. Yet, he began to doubt he was saved at all. The fact is he did not even know how he could be sure. I overheard one of the men try to console, and reassure him, yet they were taking the wrong approach.

I was a new Christian at the time, and had my own problems to deal with. However, I wanted to intervene. I knew the Bible said to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved. I wanted to ask him if he had made that simple decision.

On the other hand, I felt insignificant. Being surrounded by the entire well grounded, rooted in the Bible, long term Christians, who was I after all.

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I was wrong! I will never know how that young man came to terms with his doubts, but I should have talked to him. I should have ignored being impressed and overwhelmed by my peers. We should never judge a man's salvation by his works.

We should judge according to the word of God. Christ said,

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." (John 7:24)

It creates guilt, depression, and doubts, when we falsely judge salvation according to a man's works.

The two most misquoted portions of Scripture we use to condone our judgmental, self righteous attitude, are 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:21.

The first thing we must remember is these verses were written to the church at Corinth and the church at Galatia.

The verses we will examine were, and are, written to the saved child of God. They were written to exhort us to live a Christian life, and be examples.

(1 Corinthians 6:9-10) Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

Paul tells the church at Corinth that those who do these things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Then he tells them in the next verse...

(1 Corinthians 6:11) And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are Justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

The question is, what if I am justified and still a thief or an adulterer? Does this mean I cannot be saved if I have some sin in my life? What if I am still covetous or a drunk?

The fact is, most of the Christians in Corinth were justified, sanctified, and washed, but had one or more of the problems Paul mentioned in these verses. They were still saved.

Please notice, and please be completely logical, these verses do not say that those who do these things shall not go to heaven or shall not have eternal life!!

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It states that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (See also Galatians 5: 19-21)

When we use 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21 out of context in order to promote obedience in the life of a Christian, it produces no fruit.

It produced no fruit in the young man at Bible college, and it produced no fruit for anyone around him. It is mixing salvation with service, grace with works, and it is the lukewarm attitude of Laodicea.

Do these verses really indicate my future life, my eternity in heaven, or is it my present life in this body? Perhaps it is both? Can we know? Should we say, "I am not sure, and we will never know until we get to heaven."

Unfortunately, many preachers use this term as an easy way to avoid the question. Why would we do that if the Bible provides an answer? It is true there are some things we are not supposed to know. However, this is not one of those things.

If we are to understand what the meaning is of "inherit," we must understand what inherit means. That may sound like double talk, but it is not.

In the New Testament the word "**inherit**" is used 14 times, and is translated from the same Greek word. The word **inherited**, is used once, and is translated from the same word.

The word **inheritance**, is used 18 times, and is translated from three Greek words.

Yet every word used comes from the same two root words. They are, **kleros**, which means to acquire, or a portion of, or to share in.

The other Greek word is **nomos**, which means to parcel out, and carries the idea of a food allotment, or to graze. When cattle are grazed, they are led from one field to another according to the abundance of the field.

The two words combined carry the meaning of to share in, acquire a portion of, or an allotment, by parceling out.

The question should be, "If this is the kingdom of God, is it future, or available today?"
Can I share in, or acquire a portion of the kingdom of God today?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INHERIT THE KINGDOM

The answer is yes to all questions. The kingdom of God is future. It is also available today. And I can have a portion in this present life, and in the future.

The kingdom of God should not be translated, or confined to, the kingdom of heaven. Heaven is only part of the kingdom of God. Everything God has to offer comes from his kingdom.

It is rewards, blessings, answer to prayer, and divine protection. Anyone who has ever received a blessing or an answer to prayer has received a part of the kingdom of God.

It is a meal we have received. It is needed money to pay a bill. It is good health, joy, peace, strength, and stability.

It is sharing in, acquiring a portion of, having our allotment, and receiving a parcel.

It is also receiving our future rewards in heaven for service, at the judgment seat of Christ. (Rom. 14:10; 11 Cor. 5:10)

(Mark 10:28-30) Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

And Jesus answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Peter wanted to know what they would receive for leaving everything and following Jesus. (Ref. also Matt. 19:27-30; Luke 18:28-30)

The Lord said they would receive a hundredfold, now, in this time, and in the future. (He also said there would be persecutions)

Where does the hundredfold come from? It comes from God. If it comes from God, it must be part of his kingdom.

Peter, in his first epistle, is exhorting the reader to lead a life that reflects the Lord. He tells us to follow the example of Christ. (1 Peter 1:21)

In chapter three he tells husbands and wives how to act toward one another. He also gives a few good reasons why we should avoid evil and follow righteousness.

(1 Peter 3:9) Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing, knowing that ye are called to this, that ye should inherit a blessing.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INHERIT THE KINGDOM

Inherit a blessing. When? In the present life.

Once again, the word “inherit” means to share in, or to have a portion of.

(1 *Peter* 3:12) ***For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.***

It should be logical that God does not reward evil. He rewards good and righteousness. He closes his eyes to those who do not live a life that deserves any portion of his kingdom.

Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and the like, have no portion of, or no inheritance in, the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-20)

It has nothing to do with my being saved. Being saved comes from faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

It has to do with my service for Christ and the gospel. It is my rewards for the present and the future.

Since we still live in the fleshly body we will tend to serve the flesh. It is our natural human desire. We are not God.

We must strive to overcome the natural desires. The flesh and its desires are unrighteousness. (Galatians 5:16-18)

If we live according to the flesh, we will produce fruit according to the flesh.

If we live according to the will of God, or "walk in the spirit," (Gal. 5:16) we produce fruit in the spirit.

To judge a persons salvation by 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21 is a perversion of the Word of God.

It is adding works to grace. It is mixing salvation and service.

These verses were written to those who were already saved in order to produce fruit in their lives.

It was not written to judge their, or our, salvation.

The church at Laodicea was lukewarm. It was neither hot nor cold.

The present day church of Christ is lukewarm. It is neither hot nor cold.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INHERIT THE KINGDOM

We have a perverted gospel founded on works. We say we believe salvation is free by the grace of God, and then we tell people to do something in order to be saved.

If people do not walk, pray openly, confess something, commit, ask, quit something, or glow like a light bulb, we say they are not saved.

We go to great lengths to help God save people because we know he needs our help.

Apparently, we must think the simple gospel is not good enough. Or we must not be good enough to give the simple gospel.

Be careful or the Lord Jesus Christ may "spew thee out of his mouth." (Revelation 3:16)

SUPPLEMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

The Bible was written over a period of some 1500 years by roughly 40 different men, from all walks of life, and various backgrounds.

Yet, the Bible is in perfect harmony, because it is the Word of God, and divinely inspired. (11 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 1:20-21)

We are urged to study the Bible so we may...

1. Learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ. - Matthew 11:28
2. Grow as Christians. - 1 Peter 2:2
3. Be approved to God and rightly divide the word, and not be ashamed. - 11 Timothy 2: 15
4. Thoroughly furnished unto all good works. - 11 Timothy 3:16-17

Ref. also Ephesians 6:10-17 and 1 John 5:13

SUPPLEMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

RULES TO REMEMBER

There are several basic rules of study we should remember when rightly dividing the word.

1. Compare Scripture with Scripture. 11 Peter 1:20,21

The Bible was written as a whole. It is written to be studied as a whole. We do not build doctrine on one verse.

If there seems to be a contradiction, that contradiction needs to be studied, and a conclusion made. The Bible does not contradict itself, because God does not contradict himself.

2. All Scripture is prophecy, which means, the forth telling of the Word of God.

A. Literally - Christ is the center of all prophecy

B. Historically - The Cross is the center of all prophecy

C. Geographically - Israel is the center of all prophecy

D. Symbolically - The temple is the center of all prophecy

Every dispensation and every covenant centers around Christ and the Cross.

3. In order to understand and rightly divide the Word of God, we must be aware of, and understand the difference between salvation and service. Salvation is free. Service is work.

4. Every cult (false teacher or doctrine) will deny the following...

A. The deity of Christ (i.e.) Christ is God

B. Salvation by grace through faith

C. The rapture of the church and specifically the pre-tribulation rapture of the church

5. No matter who the teacher or the preacher is, always compare their message to the Word of God.

SUPPLEMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

PUT IT IN PERSPECTIVE

Along with the basic rules of Bible study, we need to put the Bible in perspective. There are some things we need to remember in order to keep the Bible in perspective.

1. The gospels, even though they are New Testament books, are Old Testament events. The New Testament, (covenant) did not begin until after the Cross.

The church and the church age were a mystery to the Old Testament saints. The church was not revealed to the apostles until after Christ ascended into heaven as recorded in the book of Acts.

2. There is no prophecy for the church age. The next prophetic event will be the rapture of the church.

3. The New Testament was written to the saved born again Christian. It reveals future events. (prophecy) It also tells us how we should live. In doing so, it often reveals our...

A. Past Condition - lost without Christ

B. Present Position - saved by grace, yet, still in the flesh and blood body, and not yet in the physical presence of God.

C. Future Transition - taken to be with the Lord, either upon physical death, or at the rapture.

While we live in our present bodies, our past condition is mixed with our present position.

The late great Dr. M. R. DeHaan, in his book ***Daniel the Prophet***, said concerning the Scriptures...

All Scripture has one primary interpretation.

All Scripture has many practical applications.

Most Scripture has a prophetic implication.

SUPPLEMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

MAKE A DISTINCTION

When studying the Bible it is important to make a distinction between certain truths.

Make a distinction between salvation and service. Salvation is free by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Service is what we do after we are saved. They are both voluntary. There are also consequences if we do neither.

Salvation is by grace. Service is our works. When we mix the two, we are mixing grace and works.

The Old Testament and the New Testament are to be studied together. One reveals the other. There are also many types of people and events. (1 Corinthians 10:6-15; Hebrews 3 and 4)

SUPPLEMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

TYPES AND TYPOLOGY

From the Oxford Universal Dictionary...

Type - Impression; Symbol, or figure; That by which something is symbolized or figured; A person, object, or event, of Old Testament history, prefiguring some person or thing, revealed in the new dispensation.

Typology (typeology) - A study of symbolic representation, esp., of the origin and meaning of Scripture types.

Typology, the study of types in the Scripture, is an important element in Bible study. It helps put the different dispensations in perspective, and helps understand reasons for events.

The following is not an in depth study of types and typology, however, we hope it may be helpful to some.

BONDAGE - There are various kinds of bondage mentioned in the Bible. Bondage literally means to be tied up or to bind. It may mean being held captive, or a slave, or a prisoner in chains. It may mean bound to someone or something by an oath. The words captive and captivity have the same meaning.

Sin is often referred to as a bondage. The sin of lust, which we all possess, may hold some captive.

False religion is also bondage. It holds people captive to a lie. It is the "labor" mentioned by Christ in Matthew 11:28.

It is the "bonds" mentioned by the writer of Hebrews in Hebrews 10:34.

It is labor, and heavy laden, and works.

False religion is trying to earn our way to heaven and God's favor by our own efforts. It is believing in myself and my good works. It is bondage because we know deep within ourselves it is never enough.

Bondage is also a type of being lost without Christ. It is being in bondage to the world. Held captive to the idea there is no God or we do not need God.

SUPPLEMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

TYPES AND TYPEOLOGY

EGYPT - Israel was held in bondage by Egypt. Moses was sent by God to deliver Israel out of Egypt. Israel was a type of being lost without salvation in Egypt which is a type of the sinner being lost and in bondage. Therefore, in that context, Egypt is a type of mankind needing to be delivered out of the world of sin. The deliverance can only be obtained by faith in Christ the deliverer. (Ref. Exodus 14:13, 30)

THE RED SEA - The Lord delivered Israel across the Red Sea. The Red Sea is a type of being saved by the water, which is the Word of God. (Ref. John 3:5; 15:3; Ephesians 5:26) The blood of Christ which covers our sin. (Ref. Hebrews 9:12, 14; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5)

THE WILDERNESS - Once across the Red Sea, Israel was in the wilderness. The wilderness is a type of the Christian testing ground. Once saved, the Lord expects his child to serve him by faith. (Ref. Exodus 15:22-26)

If we do not, God is not obligated to bless us or protect us. Every Christian is put into the wilderness. From there they will either serve God or they will not. (Ref. Exodus 15:25)

Israel was like so many of the children of God today. As soon as they were saved out of Egypt they began to murmur, or complain. (Exodus 15:24)

They even wished they were back in Egypt. (Exodus 16:3; Deuteronomy 1:27)

When most people get saved today, and realize they now should have faith in, and trust in, and serve the Lord, they wish they were back in Egypt.

CANAAN - Canaan is a type of the blessings of serving and trusting in the Lord. It is not a type of heaven because the Amorites and the Anakimites were there. There were battles to be won and work to do. That is not a picture of heaven. It is a picture of living the Christian life under the divine protection of God.

Israel, like the saved, born again child of God today, had a choice. Serve God by faith, and live in Canaan, or...

WANDERINGS - Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. They refused to enter Canaan. The wilderness is a type of the Christian wandering his life away and wishing he was back in Egypt. Trusting in Christ as our Savior takes faith. However, serving by faith is another story. It takes increased faith to serve Christ our entire life in light of the opposition in the world. (Deuteronomy 1:21-32)

SUPPLEMENT

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Those who did not believe God, died during the forty years of wandering, and their children went into the promised land.

Joshua and Caleb, the only two who had the faith to enter the promised land, lived a long life, and went into Canaan.

BABYLON - Israel served by faith under the leadership of men like Joshua and Othniel and Samuel. However, eventually, Israel began to serve false gods. They began to feel and become religious. It made them feel good to be religious.

It makes men feel good to be religious. When we become religious, we become self righteous. When we become self righteous, we do not need God.

This is how it became with Israel. (Isaiah 1:10-17; Isaiah 65: 1-7)

Finally, Israel was taken captive into Babylon. Babylon is the result of false religion. We may begin to serve **God** by faith, enter the promised land of Canaan, and become self righteous, get religious, and end up in captivity in Babylon.

Read Acts chapter seven where Stephen addresses Israel before he was stoned. Notice particularly verses 42 and 43.

Why are these things important? Because they were written as examples for the Christian. (Romans 10:1-4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-12; Hebrews 3 and 4)

There are many types in the Bible. However, we use these as an illustration of the folly of religion. The Laodicean church became religious and then lukewarm. Our churches today have become religious and perverted the gospel with turning from sin, and asking Jesus into your heart, and so many more religious acts.

Like the church at Laodicea, we think we are rich, but we are poor. We have perverted the gospel of Christ.

COULD IT BE WE ARE THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA?

NOTES

SUGGESTED READING

ON THE SUBJECT OF SALVATION AND ETERNAL SECURITY

Absolutely Free by Zane Hodges • Academic Books • Grand Rapids, MI

Not Chosen To Salvation by Dr. Max D. Younce • Heritage Baptist Bible Church • PO Box 573 • Walnut Grove, MN 56180

Eternal Salvation

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Saved For Certain

Can a Saved Person Ever Be Lost? By Dr. John R. Rice • The Sword of the Lord Publishers • Murfreesboro, TN 37133

The Eternal Security of the Born Again Believer

Lordship Salvation

Water Baptism and Salvation by Dr. Curtis Hutson • The Sword of the Lord Publishers • Murfreesboro, TN 37133

Assurance Here and Now by Dr. Shelton L. Smith • The Sword of the Lord Publishers • Murfreesboro, TN 37311

Eternal Security

The Curse the Cause the Cure

Let It Be Written by Dr. Dan Arbogast • Christian Bible Press • PO Box 261 • Geneva, OH 44041

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SUGGESTED READING

ON THE SUBJECT OF SALVATION AND ETERNAL SECURITY

What Happened to the Word Believe? by Donald H. Bunge • 12406 Westwood Lane • Omaha, NE 68144
Repentance What Does the Bible Teach? by Dr. Curtis Hutson • The Sword of the Lord Publishers •
Murfreesboro, TN 37311

Salvation and Service by Dr. Dan Arbogast • Christian Bible Press • PO Box 261 • Geneva, OH 44041

Hebrews by Dr. M. R. DeHaan • Zondervan Publishing

BIBLE STUDY BOOKS

CONCERNING SALVATION, WORKS, AND SERVICE

Hebrews

Galatians by Dr. M. R. DeHaan (originally printed by Zondervan)

Handbook of Personal Evangelism • Originally published by Florida Bible College • May be obtained
from Grace Community Church • PO Box 775 • Pharr, TX 78577 along with the book ***Whatever***
Happened to The Word Believe? by Donald H. Bunge

For more information please write to Christian Bible Press • PO Box 261 • Geneva OH 44041

hear ye hear ye

Any one can know they have eternal life.

THE GOSPEL IS ...

*Christ died, was buried and rose again,
for the forgiveness of sins.*

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

All have sinned and need to be forgiven.

Romas 3:10&23

*Christ's death, burial and resurrection
made forgiveness possible.*

*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 ever lasting life.*

WHAT MUST I DO?

*Acts 16:31 "Believe on the Lord Jesus
Christ, and tho shalt be saved."*

(forgiven)