

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH
Robert McLaughlin Bible Ministries

DOCTRINE OF SALVATION

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Faith is the only system of perception that is totally devoid of any human merit. Only the object has merit, and in salvation the object of faith is Our Lord Jesus Christ. No one has ever been saved by asking Jesus to come into his heart or life.

How much faith does it take to be saved? It takes just a little bit more than no faith at all.

The perfect salvation work of Christ on the cross, which is called **expiation**, excludes anything else being added to faith. No works of any kind are allowed.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that [salvation] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.¹*

What is grace in relationship to salvation? Grace is all that God is free to do for unsaved mankind on the basis of the saving work of Christ on the cross. Grace is extended to unbelievers, who are living under spiritual death in total depravity and total helplessness regarding salvation. Therefore, salvation is a matter of grace, and entirely the work of God. Salvation is the work of the Father in judging our sins, the work of the Son in being judged for our sins, and the work of the Holy Spirit in common and efficacious grace. This is why the way of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ -- faith alone with no works or emotions added to it.

Lake of Fire

The Lake of Fire is the final destination for both fallen angels and unbelieving mankind, and it is both literal and eternal. The Lake of Fire was prepared originally for Satan and his fallen angels.

Matthew 25:41 *Then He will also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;"*

However, unbelievers will also go there, with no way of escape.

John 3:18 *He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 3:36 *He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*

Hebrews 9:27 *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment,*

The first occupants of the Lake of Fire will be the beast and false prophet of the Tribulation, Revelation 19:20. The devil will also be in the Lake of Fire, Revelation 20:10. After the Great

White Throne Judgment, the unbelievers of the human race will also occupy the Lake of Fire, Revelation 20:14. Unbelievers are pulled out of the fire of Hades, judged, and cast into the Lake of Fire, Revelation 20:15 and 21:8.

Both torments in Hades and the Lake of Fire are vividly described in Mark 9:48, *where their worm does not die* [this represents the conscience], *and the fire is not quenched*. Everyone should hear the screams of those who die burning in total agony, so that they will understand the importance of believing in Jesus Christ. In eternity, the screams never stop; they go on forever and ever and ever, simply because the souls there refused the **so great salvation** provided by Jesus Christ.

There is a place of final destiny for every member of the human race who has rejected the Gospel and the doctrine of salvation. It is described as: a place of torment, Luke 16:28; a place where desire is never met, Luke 16:24; a bottomless pit, Revelation 9:2; outer darkness, Matthew 8:12; fire unquenchable, Luke 3:17; the furnace of fire, Matthew 13:42. It is a place of unspeakable misery, indicated by the phrase **eternal fire**. Many believe it is a place with a liquid form of lava referred to as **the lake**, which burns with fire and brimstone, Revelation 21:8. It is described as black darkness in Jude v.13; a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth, Matthew 13:50; and it is said about those in Hell that *...the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night*, in Revelation 14:11.

If this is all true, then we should all see the value of understanding the doctrine of salvation; and by understanding it, also being accurate in its presentation. God is perfect and His ways are perfect and accurate. This is why Ephesians 5:15 says, *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise*.

Salvation by Works is Rejected by the Word of God

There are at least eight categories of salvation by works rejected by the Word of God, as stated in Ephesians 2:9, *not as a result of works*. They are as follows:

1. SALVATION BY VERBAL WORKS

Repent and believe. Repent means to change your mind about Christ, as occurs under the Holy Spirit's ministry of common grace. The word **repent** has been misinterpreted as **feeling sorry**. No one is saved by feeling sorry for his sins.

Confession of sins. This is only for the believer **after** salvation.

Begging God to save you. This is ridiculous, coming from one who is spiritually dead.

Inviting Christ into your heart. This is total nonsense and blasphemy. A spiritually dead person cannot invite Eternal God, The Lord Jesus Christ, anywhere; not into his heart, or his home, or his life. It is stupidity, asininity, emotion, and works.

Acknowledging Christ publicly. This is not effectual for salvation. It is a distortion of Romans 10:9-10 which refers to **cause and effect**. The cause is faith; the result, as the believer matures, is to witness and to acknowledge Christ.

2. SALVATION BY RITUAL WORKS

Circumcision. This was a favorite of the Jews. The book of Galatians was written to correct this issue. The Galatians were typical Gaelic people, and they were very excited about Paul's ministry, responded to it, and became believers. However, after Paul left, the Judaizers counteracted, telling these new believers that they could not be truly saved until they were also circumcised. The new Gentile believers accepted the idea, so Paul wrote Galatians, a letter telling them that they had gone astray from the Gospel. Paul likened the Galatians to the priests who had mutilated themselves to impress God, which of course didn't work.

Baptism. The idea of salvation by baptism is prominent today. It was started by the Catholics, and copied by the Lutherans during the Reformation. It is a heresy that has always existed in the Church Age. In reality, baptism was a testimony to, and identification with, retroactive positional truth and current positional truth, prior to the completion of the Canon.

Partaking of the Eucharist. This is a favorite of Roman Catholicism, which teaches that The Lord Jesus Christ goes back into their body, after having left it, through the taking in of the Eucharist.

3. SALVATION BY PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKS

Come forward in an invitation extended at the end of a service.

Raise your hand during prayer.

Walk down an aisle.

Give public testimony to your faith in Christ.

These make an issue of yourself and call attention to yourself. But salvation is designed to call attention to Jesus Christ and no one else.

4. SALVATION BY CORPORATE WORKS

Join the church. If you don't join, you are not saved.

Tithe. This was commanded in the Mosaic Law as a 10% income tax for the client nation Israel. Tithing has no spiritual connotation, either for salvation or blessing. Giving is a matter of the privacy of your own priesthood, and the amount you give is based on your own self-determination and has nothing to do with any blessing.

Church-related works. Just work faithfully around the church and God will save you.

5. SALVATION BY RELIGIOUS WORKS

Satan counterfeits Christianity through religion. Religion is one of the greatest systems of both moral and immoral degeneration.

Keep the Mosaic Law. This is a result of the Reformation. It started out with justification by faith, but it gradually moved to the works of keeping the Law and eventually developed

into the Galatian compromise, which stated, first you have to believe in Christ, then you have to keep the Law.

Do penance. A favorite of Catholicism. The noun **penance** has basically three meanings: (1) remorse for your past conduct; (2) a Catholic sacrament: repentance and confession, then satisfaction and absolution; and (3) self-mortification, self-abasement, i.e. voluntary self-punishment in order to atone for some wrongdoing. All of these are in direct contradiction to the finished work on the cross.

Practice the Lordship of Christ. This refers to the false doctrine taught which says, “if Christ is not Lord of all, He’s not Lord AT ALL”. This is a failure to understand one of the forty-plus things done for us at the moment of salvation. By the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which enters us into union with Christ, He is Our Lord at the very moment of salvation. Whether we recognize this or not is a matter of cognition of pertinent doctrine. Regardless, we do not have to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord to receive salvation. It is simply **believe in Christ.**

Practice asceticism. What we give up at any time is inconsequential! People want to take what they have sacrificed or given up in their lives and compare it with the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Self-denial and maintaining a healthy body. To associate salvation or spirituality with health foods and vitamins is ludicrous.

6. SALVATION BY BEHAVIORAL WORKS

Salvation by morality. Morality has to do with establishment; it is not the Christian way of life. The pre-designed plan of God is higher than morality. Moral degeneracy is very prominent in Christianity today, whereby Christians in their arrogant self-righteousness are trying to straighten everyone and everything out, by superimposing Christian laws and standards on both believer and unbeliever.

Salvation by personality change. Although a change in one’s personality may be desirable, it is not the means of salvation.

Salvation by keeping taboos. Many think you cannot really be saved unless you stop drinking, smoking, dancing, wearing makeup, swimming in mixed company, etc.

7. SALVATION BY EMOTIONAL WORKS

Faith is a non-meritorious act of perception and has nothing to do with emotion!

Salvation by ecstasies, or speaking in tongues. No one has legitimately spoken in tongues since August of 70 A.D. The gift of tongues was a temporary spiritual gift at the beginning of the Church Age to evangelize Jews in Gentile languages, as prophesied in Isaiah 28. Where people allege that speaking in tongues, or the so-called second blessing, is necessary for salvation, they are either very emotional or demon possessed.

Salvation through “feeling” saved, or weeping tears at the altar. Again, faith has nothing to do with emotion.

8. SALVATION BY INVITATION

We do not invite Christ anywhere. He does not come to us; we come to Him by believing in Him. Remember Our Lord’s invitation in Matthew 11:28: *“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

John 6:35 *Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst.”*

John 6:37 *“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.”*

John 6:47 explains what it means to come to Christ: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes [in Me] has eternal life.”* Always in the salvation invitation we go to Jesus Christ; He does not come to us. Therefore, note that there are three blasphemous invitations:

We do not invite Christ to come to us. Revelation 3:20 is addressed to believers: *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”* This is a verse dealing with recovery from carnality, and has nothing to do with salvation.

We do not invite Christ into our heart. Jeremiah 17.9 teaches about our heart, *The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?* Inviting Christ into our heart is an emotional form of legalism.

We do not invite Christ into our life. Romans 5:12 teaches about our life, *Therefore, just as through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.*

The unbeliever is under spiritual death, which means total depravity and being completely cut off from God. We **do not** invite Jesus Christ into a state of total depravity, and we **do not** invite Jesus Christ into spiritual death. We make no invitations to Jesus Christ! If that is all you’ve ever done, you had better believe in Jesus Christ or you will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. Salvation is through faith alone in Christ alone; He invites us to come to Him – we do not invite Him to come to us.

Faith Plus Nothing as the Condition for Eternal Salvation

Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone; nothing is added. There are three reasons for faith plus nothing as the condition for eternal salvation:

1. Efficacious grace (God doing the work and God getting the credit), documented by Ephesians 2:8-9.
2. Our Lord’s utterance on the cross, *“Tetelestia!”* [It is finished, with the result that it stands finished.]

3. The direct statement of Scripture.

COMMON AND EFFICACIOUS GRACE

Efficacious grace fits into the pattern of faith alone. When the spiritually dead person responds to the divine call or invitation to eternal salvation, he simply responds by believing in Jesus Christ. This is classified as faith alone, or faith plus nothing. When the spiritually dead person simply believes in Christ, God the Holy Spirit causes the faith to be effective for eternal life. This is classified as efficacious grace, or the **Doctrine of Effectual Faith**. The faith of the spiritually dead person indicates positive volition and a non-meritorious function that is compatible with grace. However, because the spiritually dead person who believes in Christ is helpless, his faith is ineffective without the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's efficacious grace causes the unbeliever's faith to be effective. However, no works can be added to faith. The Holy Spirit can only make faith and faith alone effective for salvation. Any works added to faith in Christ are dead works, and the Holy Spirit does not make dead works effective for salvation. Principle: If a person adds any works at the moment of believing in Jesus Christ, he or she is NOT saved at that point. If anything at all is added to faith, God the Holy Spirit will not touch it, and so there is no efficacious grace. The omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit will make effectual only non-meritorious faith alone in Jesus Christ.

The very nature of real spiritual death at birth eliminates any system of salvation by works. The spiritually dead person is incapable of doing anything to obtain salvation. Spiritual death at birth includes: (1) total depravity, which means moral or immoral degeneration; (2) total separation from God; (3) total helplessness to attain a relationship with God; and (4) dichotomy, which is having only a body and soul, without a human spirit. Because of all this, we are unable to understand the simplest concepts of the Gospel. The spiritually dead person can only produce dead works, which have no validity with God.

In the function of evangelism, there are two acts of human volition: (1) hearing the Gospel, which is non-meritorious; and (2) believing in Jesus Christ, which is non-meritorious. However, the spiritually dead person is unable to understand what he hears, and powerless to make his faith in Christ effective for salvation.

The sequence of the pre-salvation grace ministry of God is as follows:

1. In common grace, the Holy Spirit makes the gospel message perspicuous [clear and understandable], to a spiritually dead individual.

1Corinthians 2:14 *But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.*

2. God the Father invites the spiritually dead person to believe in Christ, which is referred to as the **divine call**.
3. The spiritually dead person believes in Christ, and the Holy Spirit causes faith to be effective for salvation, which is called **efficacious grace**.

The spiritually dead person can choose to listen to the Gospel and believe in Christ; but these two decisions come from spiritual death and are powerless to provide salvation or make faith effective. Therefore, pre-salvation clarification of the Gospel is the ministry of God the Holy Spirit. The omnipotence of God provides the ability for the unbeliever to understand the Gospel, believe in Jesus Christ, and to accept the invitation. At the moment of simply believing, the Holy Spirit makes our faith effective for salvation.

When any works are added to faith in Christ, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit will not cause that faith to be effective. The reason is because divine omnipotence and human works, or human power, are mutually exclusive and mutually restrictive. Consequently, human works added to faith in Christ cancels faith because human works is human power, which is rejected by grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that [salvation] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Both *charis* [grace] and *pistis* [faith] are in the feminine gender. Then follows the peritactic *kai*, translated **and**, which is used to coordinate expressions that have no syntactical relationship in the Greek. This is followed by the neuter gender of the immediate demonstrative pronoun *houtos* which cannot refer to either grace or faith. And so the phrase *and that* refers to salvation in general; ... *that* [salvation is] *not of yourselves*, because it is the gift of God under the grace ministry of the Holy Spirit. We are spiritually dead, meaning we are under total depravity, total separation from God, and totally helpless to do anything about it. Being spiritually dead, we cannot even understand the Gospel because we have spiritual brain death. So, first the Holy Spirit makes the Gospel clear and understandable through **common grace**. Then when we believe, by expressing positive volition toward the salvation work of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit takes our faith [positive volition] and makes it effectual for salvation. Therefore, salvation is not from ourselves, because it is a matter of common grace, the divine call, and efficacious grace; and that is why it is referred to as a gift from God.

The Roman Catholic Church

Salvation by grace is very important to understand, especially in the light of the fact that we live in a part of the nation where Roman Catholicism is very popular. Roman Catholic salvation adds works to faith in Christ, and salvation by Roman Catholic faith is not true salvation. Many Roman Catholics, when questioned, claim that they believe that Christ died on the cross for their sins; hence, they allege to believe in Christ. But at the same time, the Roman Catholic Church has a system of penance and works that they follow for salvation; and those Catholics who follow that system of penance, indulgences and works for salvation are not saved! They have cancelled any benefit of their faith by adding the works imposed upon them by the Roman Catholic religion.

For instance, the Roman Catholic Church believes in Purgatory, which they call an intermediate state after death designed for expiatory purification, especially from venial sins, which they claim, are sins capable of being forgiven. Many of them light candles or say masses for the dead. None of this is legitimate, and all of it is works.

There are, however, Roman Catholics that do not depend on penance or a system of works for salvation, and these individuals are truly saved. Therefore, it is impossible to judge whether any Roman Catholic is saved or not, since only the individual himself knows. If he is depending alone

on the work of Christ on the cross, he is saved. But if he adds and follows the system of penance and works professed by the Roman Catholic Church, he is not saved. The Roman Catholic view of Purgatory, mortal sins, and penance, forms a system of ecclesiastical works that nullifies faith in Christ. One of the 40+ things we receive at salvation is eternal life. Therefore, we do not have to practice a system of works to ensure or regain salvation, as is alleged by the Roman Catholic Church and many other protestant churches.

Some Roman Catholics are saved because at some moment in time they believed in Christ alone for salvation, totally apart from the ritual and penance imposed by the church. The Roman Catholic belief that believing Christ died for their sins on the cross, followed by adherence to penance and indulgences to get into Heaven, is not salvation. Salvation is by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. The practice of any form of works is contradictory; therefore faith is nullified by these works.

The Correct Order of Evangelism

When someone communicates the Gospel to an unbeliever, the Holy Spirit, under the ministry of common grace, makes only what is accurate understandable and lucid. Then follows the divine invitation of God the Father to believe in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation. The invitation from God the Father is taught in John 6:44: “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him ...*”. God the Father **draws** by the ministry of the Holy Spirit in making the Gospel clear. The invitation from God the Son is found in John 10:27-28: “*My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.*” Finally, in efficacious grace, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit makes faith in Christ effective for salvation. Therefore, in principle, the spiritually dead come to Christ for salvation, not the reverse. The spiritually dead person does not invite Christ to come to him.

“TETELESTAI!” OUR LORD’S UTTERANCE ON THE CROSS

Another reason for the fact that salvation is by faith plus nothing is the statement of Our Lord on the cross immediately after he was judged for the sins of the world. After bearing and being judged for our sins, Jesus Christ was still very much alive, as noted by the fact that He said, “*Tetelestai*”, which is translated “finished in the past with the result that it stands finished forever”. It is the **spiritual death** of Jesus Christ on the cross and his saving work that is in view in the phrase, “*It is finished!*” in John 19:30.

Like animal sacrifices in which literal blood was used, in the physical death of Christ we also have literal blood involved; however, the blood was **inside** His Body, not spilled all over the cross.

John 19:28-37 *After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, to fulfill the Scripture, said, “I am thirsty.” A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop and brought it up to His mouth. Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a*

spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him Whom they pierced."

We need to remember that Old Testament rituals, that so graphically depicted the saving work of Christ, pictured His spiritual death. His spiritual death is the source of our salvation. Therefore, the physical death of the sacrificial animal actually represented the spiritual death of The Lord Jesus Christ. This analogy will not be confused if we understand the nature of the Lord's physical death, and see that although it has great significance, it was not the means of salvation. The means of salvation was not the physical death of Christ, but His spiritual death, so we must understand that the sacrificed animal's physical death was **not** a picture of Christ's physical death. If it were, the animal would have been nailed to a cross, or Christ would have been slaughtered on an altar!

John 19:34 *But one of the soldiers ...*[This is a Roman soldier stationed at the cross.]

John 19:34 *But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, ...* The Greek word for **side** is *pleura*, which refers to the part of the chest where there are no bones, or the chest cavity.

... and immediately blood and water came out. Notice that word immediately; this was literal blood. In fact, it was blood clots and serum.

The Lord Jesus Christ had blood inside of His body when He died; He did not bleed to death. He was fully in control and in command of Himself on the cross. As John 10:17-18 says, "*For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.*" The red liquid that ran through the veins and arteries of Jesus' body is not related to our salvation, and there is no Biblical basis for attributing any unusual or magical formula to His blood. Our Lord was minus an old sin nature, but that was because of the virgin birth and the **Doctrine of Impeccability**. From His own volition, He chose not to sin, or as Isaiah 53:10 says, *...He would render Himself [His soul] as a guilt offering [for sin].* The term **Blood of Christ** is far more significant than any magical or mystical power falsely ascribed to His physical blood. In John 19:30, we are told that The Lord's literal blood was not a factor in either his spiritual or His physical death.

John 19:30 *Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.*

After The Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty for sins, He announced that salvation was finished. Then He bowed His head and gave up His life.

John 19:31 *Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.*

The religious Jews were always up to something; they would strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. This is a typical evil of religion. They were very particular about the superficialities of life, while ignoring, avoiding or rejecting the things of eternal importance. They had just demanded and

secured the execution of the only perfect man who ever lived, their own Messiah! And now, in their hypocrisy, they are concerned about a man hanging on a cross during the Sabbath.

What is meant by *the day of preparation*? **Preparation** is the Greek word *paraskeue* and it refers to the day when the Jews prepared either for a weekly Saturday Sabbath or for a special feast Sabbath. The Jews, who were so fussy in observing all of these detached ceremonies and rituals that spoke of Christ, had just witnessed the Passover right before their eyes. But, did they believe? They did not! Religion had blinded them, and blinded by their religion and superstitions, the Jews failed to understand the real significance of the holy days. Principle: Ritual without reality is meaningless.

Notice the last phrase in John 19:31: ... [they] *asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away*. It was Roman custom to leave a body nailed to the cross until the flesh rotted away. However, Jewish law demanded that the body of any criminal be put out of sight during a Sabbath or feast day in order not to pollute the land, Deuteronomy 21:22-23. Therefore, the Romans would break the legs by using a heavy mallet in order to crush their bones and cause the body to hang. And these filthy pious religious Jews certainly did not want their victim, whom they had railroaded through the courts, to be hanging on a cross during one of their high Sabbaths.

John 19:32 *So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him;*

The Roman soldiers went up to the two thieves, one on each side of The Lord Jesus Christ; and, in order to be able to take them down before the Sabbath, the soldiers pounded their legs until their bones were crushed. Once the bones were crushed, the body would hang and suffocate. Then, in deeper shock and unable to force themselves up to relieve the pressure on their muscles, the thieves could not exhale in their lungs, and so they died of suffocation.

The Jews were waiting for the same thing to take place at the cross of Jesus Christ; however, notice verse 33, *but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs*. The Lord Jesus Christ was already physically dead. Plus, the fact that the soldiers did not break His legs is a fulfillment of specific promises contained in the Old Testament scriptures.

Exodus 12:46 *It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.*

Numbers 9:12 *They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it.*

Psalms 34:20 *He keeps all his bones, not one of them is broken.*

John 19:36-37 *For these things came to pass to fulfill the Scripture, "Not a bone of Him shall be broken." And again another Scripture says, "They shall look on Him Whom they pierced."*

God keeps His Word to you and me today, just as He did throughout all the generations leading up to the cross. Passover after Passover, over the time period of nearly 1500 years, the Jews had carefully prepared their Passover lamb in such a way as never to break even one of its bones. Every time they went through this ritual, they were saying in effect, God's Word is true and God will

fulfill His promise. Now here, after the crucifixion, God's character was on the line. In spite of the insidiously evil demands of the religious Jews ... in spite of Pontius Pilate's orders ... in spite of the entire Roman army ... not one bone could ever be broken! Why? Because **God keeps His Word**, no matter what is involved! God always honors and respects His Word, and therefore, Bible Doctrine resident in your soul is your source of confidence and security (**doctrinal vindication**).

John 19:34 *But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.*

The soldiers had laid down their mallets when one of them picked up his spear and hurled it into Jesus' side. In doing so, He fulfilled Zechariah 12:10, " ... so that they will look on Me, Whom they have pierced".

The Lord Jesus Christ anticipated that Satan would attack the cross by perverting the meaning of the blood in an attempt to obscure the importance of spiritual death. So, while still on the cross, Our Lord provided proof that He did not bleed to death; and unlike that of the sacrificial animal, His literal blood has no spiritual significance. Therefore, Our Lord purposely thrust His body forward to demonstrate for all to see and for John to record that He did not die from loss of blood.

The Greek word *pleura*, translated **side**, refers to the chest cavity. When the soldier's javelin penetrated upward through Christ's rib cage without breaking any bones, immediately blood and water gushed forth. This is possible only under certain conditions. The word for **water** is *hudor*, and this word is used in the medical sense for the grayish-yellow fluid that separates from the blood. Instead of **blood and water**, a more accurate translation would be **blood and serum**. Blood is made up of two basic components: red corpuscles and white platelets. When the blood in the body of Jesus Christ stopped circulating and started to settle, it also began to separate. The white platelets, being lighter than the red corpuscles, floated to the top. So, when the spear was thrust into the chest cavity, out came blood (red corpuscles) and serum (white platelets). The blood was not clotting in His body, just separating. For the blood inside the body to separate into red corpuscles and white platelets, or serum, death must **not** have been caused by bleeding. This is why the word **immediately** is used to demonstrate the accumulation of the blood in the body. And so, despite prolonged physical torture during His trials and sufferings on the cross, Jesus' physical death came suddenly.

And how did His death come? Well, with complete self-control and clarity of mind, Christ sent away His spirit. He did bleed ... his back was beaten, his hands and feet were nailed, thorns were forced into His scalp! But all these lacerations and puncture wounds did not kill Our Lord, and external bleeding was not the cause of death. Internal hemorrhaging would have resulted in very little blood remaining in the heart. The very sight of blood and serum is medical proof not only that Jesus was physically dead, but that He did not bleed to death.

The Biblical evidence is conclusive; yet, the crucifixion accounts fit perfectly with medical knowledge. With Christ's body thrust forward, it remained in the perfect position for the maximum amount of blood to settle in the dependent portion of the heart. The evidence to all who witnessed the crucifixion, along with those studying this verse, as to the exact manner of His physical death, is recorded forever in the Word of God. If this evidence is missed, the **blood of Christ** will be misunderstood, and His finished work will be misunderstood as well.

In John 19:30, The Lord Jesus Christ said, “*Tetelesti!*” [It is finished!] This is the perfect passive indicative of *teleo*. The intensive perfect refers to a completed action with emphasis on existing results of that past action. Hence, it refers to a present state resulting from a past action. The present state is that salvation is available. The past action is that Jesus Christ was judged for our sins. The intensive perfect states in a strong way the fact that a thing **is**. In the perfect tense, *teleo* means, **it has been finished in the past with the result that it stands finished forever**. The passive voice represents the subject, Jesus Christ, as being acted upon by someone else; i.e., God the Father, Who imputed our sins to Jesus Christ and judged every one of them. The omnipotence of the Father imputed all of our sins to Christ on the cross. The justice of the Father judged every sin in the history of the human race. Jesus Christ received the action of the verb, being judged as our substitute for the sins of the human race. However, remember that Jesus Christ completed that action on the cross while He was still alive. The indicative mood is declarative for a dogmatic statement of doctrine. John 19:30 therefore indicates that the work of salvation was completed on the cross. And when something is completed, nothing can be added to it!

The one thing for which we can take absolutely zero credit is faith; none of us earn or deserve salvation. The only condition for eternal life is non-meritorious personal faith in Jesus Christ, whose substitutionary spiritual death on the cross provided the efficacious work for salvation. That is why Our Lord said after He had been judged for our sins, “It is finished!” Salvation was completed on the cross. There is nothing we can add to it now or ever. Eternal salvation is a free gift that is compatible with God’s policy of grace. Therefore, it is attained by faith alone in Jesus Christ. By adding any human effort or merit to faith for salvation, man is in competition with God, and that alone is blasphemous.

The phrase **blood of Christ** actually speaks of three basic doctrines with regard to His saving work on the cross: the **Doctrine of Propitiation**, Romans 3:25; the **Doctrine of Redemption** [solving the sin problems], Ephesians 1:7, Colossians 1:14; and the **Doctrine of Reconciliation**, Colossians 1:20. Remember that, although His literal blood was minus the old sin nature, when His blood is mentioned in Scripture it refers to the saving work of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In Leviticus 17:11, the phrase, *for the life of the flesh is in the blood* refers to animals, not to humans. We are a higher order of creature than animals; we have a human soul, and human life was imputed to that soul, not to our human blood. When the soul leaves the body, it is the sign of physical death. When a person dies, his blood remains in his body; only the soul and human spirit are ... *absent from the body and ... at home with the Lord*, 2Corinthians 5:8.

The blood of Christ had no magical formula or special mystifying substance. His blood was minus the old sin nature, but it was His soul that gave His blood value, **not** His blood that gave his soul value. The thought of that is blasphemous. As God He was not able to sin, but as man He was able not to sin. It is the person of Jesus Christ that gave His blood value; and His sinless unstained blood was not the issue in salvation, it was His spiritual death and His Soul. It was not the blood that prevented His soul from sinning; it was His soul that kept His blood from being affected by a sin nature.

Animal blood was the basis for setting up a representative analogy, or a teaching aide. The animal blood was used to teach the fulfillment that takes place on the cross. Therefore, when the blood of Christ is mentioned in the New Testament, it is a reference to His saving work on the cross.

Ephesians 1:7 *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our*

trespasses, according to the riches of His grace”

Hebrews 9:14 *how much more will **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, **cleanse your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?*

1Peter 1:19 *but [redeemed] with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, **the blood of Christ**.*

Revelation 1:5 *To Him who loves us and **released us from our sins by His blood** --*

Romans 5:9 *Much more then, having now been **justified by His blood**, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.*

Hebrews 13:12 *Therefore Jesus also, that He might **sanctify the people through His own blood**, suffered outside the gate.*

1John 1:7 *but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the **blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin**.*

DIRECT STATEMENT OF SCRIPTURE

The third reason why salvation is based on faith plus nothing is the direct statement of Scripture.

John 16:8-9 *“And He [Holy Spirit], when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me”*

Our personal sins are not an issue in salvation. They were an issue at the cross, and Jesus Christ was already judged for every one of them. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, who convicts us with regard to salvation, never convicts us with regard to our personal sins. However, the one sin He convicts us of is the only sin for which Christ could not die: the sin of rejecting Him, or the sin of unbelief.

John 3:15 *so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.*

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish [eternal security], but have eternal life.*

John 3:18 *He who believes in Him [Christ] is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Notice that the word **believe** is repeated three times in this verse, and that no works are added to it.

John 3:36 *He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not believe in the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him.*

The issue in salvation is that you either believe in Christ once, or you do not believe.

John 6:47 *“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.”*

John 11:25-26 *Jesus said to her [Martha], "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die."*

You have to believe while you are alive; there is no second chance after you die.

John 20:31 *but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*

Acts 16:31 *They said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household [meaning, if anyone in your household believes in Christ, they too are saved]."*

Notice that the command is to **believe**; there is nothing added to it.

Galatians 3:26 *For you are all sons of God [Royal Family] through faith in Christ Jesus.*

Notice that nothing is added to faith.

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek [Gentile].*

Everyone is saved the same way, both Jew and Gentile. They are saved, not by keeping the Law, but only by believing in Christ.

Romans 3:20-22 *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets [Old Testament], even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

Romans 3:28 *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the Law.*

Notice it is by faith apart from works. This means that when a person adds any type of works whatsoever to faith, he is not justified and therefore not saved.

Romans 4:4-5 *Now to the one who works [for salvation], his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work [for salvation], but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness ...*

Romans 4:14 *For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified;*

In other words, God has lied and turned back on His promises.

Galatians 2:16 *nevertheless knowing that a man [spiritually dead person] is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the*

Law no flesh will be justified.

How are we justified in the eyes of God?

Romans 5:1 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through Our Lord Jesus Christ."*

The only way of salvation is one act of personal faith in Jesus Christ with nothing added to it. To add to faith in Christ for salvation is no salvation at all. If, when you believe in Christ, you are depending upon something else besides faith in Christ, you are not saved.

Philippians 3:9 *and may [I] be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.*

2Timothy 3:15 *and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Even if you later renounce your faith in Christ, you are still saved.

2Timothy 2:11-13 (ASV) *Faithful is the saying [Word]: For if we died with Him [Christ; and we have, through retroactive positional truth], we will also live with Him [Christ]; if we endure [suffering for blessing], we will also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us [escrow savings account blessings for time and eternity]; if we are faithless [do not believe, after we are saved], He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.*

God the Father cannot deny the indwelling of the Trinity.

Romans 3:24 *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*

Salvation is said to be by grace, and grace is God doing the work and God getting the credit, and excludes human works.

Romans 4:16(a) *For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace,*

Romans 5:1-2 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand;*

Romans 5:15 *But the free gift [of salvation] is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one [Adam] the many [human race] died [spiritual death], much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.*

Romans 5:17 *For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], [spiritual] death reigned through the one [Adam], much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.*

2Timothy 1:9 *who [God the Father] has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity past,*

CHRIST'S DEATH AS A SUBSTITUTION

Christ died has a substitute for us once; we believe in Him once.

Hebrews 9:27-28 *And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been offered once ...*

Romans 5:8 demonstrates the proposition of substitution: **huper** plus the genitive of **ego** in the plural. *But God demonstrates His own love toward us [this is impersonal unconditional love for all mankind in the status of real spiritual death], in that while we were yet sinners [objects of divine impersonal love], Christ died [as a substitute] for us.* This is substitutionary spiritual death on the cross.

1Peter 3:18 (ASV) *For Christ also died once for our sins, the righteous one [impeccable humanity of Christ] as a substitute for the unrighteous ones.*

Notice how this word **once** keeps occurring. It is the Greek word **H-A-P-A-X-Z**. In this verse we have **huper** plus the genitive of advantage of **adikos**, which means, **on behalf of the unrighteous ones** or better still, **as a substitute for the unrighteous ones**.

In both Romans 5:8 and 1Peter 3:18, Christ died as a substitute for us. Notice that both verses say Christ died **once**. So our response to the one act of sacrifice is one act of faith, and faith alone. By one act of faith, we have eternal life.

Galatians 3:13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for [instead of, in place of, on behalf of, as a substitute for] us – for it stands written (Deuteronomy 21:23), “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree [cross]” –*

The Law puts a curse on sin. Jesus Christ, as our substitute, was judged for our sins. In Galatians 3:13, the **Doctrine of Redemption** is used because it is talking about the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law is designed to put us into the slave market of sin. The only way we can be redeemed from the slave market of sin, as members of the human race, is for someone to pay for our freedom. Jesus Christ paid for our freedom on the cross. That is the meaning of redemption. Yet, the Mosaic Law is used by many as a means of salvation. Such people add the works of the Law to faith in Jesus Christ. That is why Romans 3:20 says, *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.* The purpose of the Law is to make us aware of the fact that we are sinners with an old sin nature.

Romans 3:28 adds, *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.* This means faith alone, and only one time is necessary for us to believe in Christ. And the first time we do believe, we possess eternal life.

Galatians 2:16 *nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus,*

One act of faith in Christ is all it takes to possess eternal life.

1John 4:9-10 *By this the love of God [impersonal love for all mankind] was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him [or we might be saved]. In this is love [by this is divine impersonal love for all mankind manifested], not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

Propitiation means that once God the Father imputed and judged all our sins in Christ on the cross, at that very moment He was satisfied completely with the work of Our Lord. There is only one work of salvation that satisfies God the Father, and that is the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Grace in salvation is the work of God. God the Father imputed our sins to Jesus Christ on the cross. God the Son received the imputation and judgment for our sins on the cross through His substitutionary spiritual death. God the Holy Spirit reveals the plan of salvation to the spiritually dead person under the **Doctrine of Common Grace**. So an invitation from God is extended. When that invitation is accepted, it is simply by believing in Jesus Christ that God the Holy Spirit makes our faith effective.

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that [salvation] not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

Therefore, the whole principle of eternal salvation is faith and faith alone.

ⁱ All verses are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, unless otherwise noted. Corrected translations by Pastor Robert R. McLaughlin from the original Greek or Hebrew text appear in brackets.