


FOCUS ON 

**TRUTH** SERIES

THE TRUTH ABOUT  
**SALVATION**



**DANNY SHELTON**

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The Focus on Truth series explores important Bible topics that impact our present well-being and our eternal destiny. In a world of disinformation and conflicting opinions, only the Bible stands as a sure beacon of light, hope, and truth.

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# THE TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION

To the Christian, salvation is the most crucial topic in the entire Bible. When we study what the Bible has to say about salvation, we will find that our first parents were created in the image of God. They were created as perfect, sinless beings. They communed with God daily in the Garden of Eden, but one day something terrible happened. Adam and Eve disobeyed God. And because they disobeyed God, they were separated from Him and would now suffer the consequences of their disobedience. The Bible describes their disobedience as “sin.” “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

God had a choice. He could have destroyed His creation because of their sin, or He could devise a plan whereby “fallen” humans could be restored to perfection and once again live in a world without sickness, pain, sorrow, and death! And amazingly enough, this plan of salvation was made even before Adam and Eve were created! What? Does that mean God knew in advance that His creation would fall from grace even before He created Adam from the dust of the ground? The answer is yes!

And because God is love (1 John 4:8), this is precisely what He did. He came up with a plan of redemption/restoration for sinful human beings that we Christians refer to as the “plan of salvation.”

Thus, this is the purpose of this little book. It was written so that anyone who reads it will understand that by nature, we are all born sinners into a sinful world and have a terminal illness called *death*. But there is a way of escape. Praise be to God! He has made a plan of salvation that can give immortality to our mortal souls! We will

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find the truth about salvation and how to claim it. It is a free gift from God to His creation.

Before we can really understand why death is the consequence of sin, we must first see what the Bible has to say about the character of God. This will tell us a lot. While salvation is simple to understand, it is deep enough to study for a lifetime!

## GOD'S PLAN FOR FALLEN HUMANITY

The Bible tells us that God is love. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:7, 8). Love is not just one of God’s attributes or characteristics. It is who God is. *God is love!*

With this in mind, we begin to get the picture. Since God is love, He would love His creation enough to make a way of escape from the certain death that results from disobedience. God’s plan for fallen humans is found in John 3:16. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Because of God’s amazing love for His creation, He gave His only Son so that every person ever born on planet Earth would have the option to accept His free gift of salvation and restoration. The Bible says, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53). In other words, we will one day, at the second coming of Christ, be restored to the perfect image of God!

So now we know that God loves us intensely! His love for His creation exceeds human understanding! I usually like to use some “common sense” illustrations in my writing, along with Bible texts, to make a point. Sometimes a little common sense goes a long way in studying and understanding the Word of God. But as we seek to focus on the truth about salvation, we soon find out that this most incredible story ever told defies common sense of the human mind!

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This love story is unparalleled because it lasts throughout all the ceaseless ages of eternity! Praise and thanks be to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

Yes, the biblical account of the plan of salvation is the most incredible gift ever given to humanity! It comes at a great price paid by a God of love—God gave His own Son to redeem fallen men and women!

Only in heaven will we be able to comprehend the love God has for us! “Now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Do you spend time contemplating what it will be like to actually meet Jesus in the air as He descends to earth to redeem His children? I do! What a glorious picture! Yet I’m also reminded of 1 Corinthians 2:9.

*“But as it is written,  
‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*

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*Nor have entered into the heart of man  
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him”*

(EMPHASIS ADDED).

What a day, glorious day that will be! It is my hope and prayer that you and I will be among those caught up to meet Jesus in the air on that great and glorious day!

Now that we know from the Bible that God is love, the question could be asked: If God loved Adam and Eve so much, why did He kick them out of the Garden of Eden for simply eating a piece of fruit that He forbade them to eat? Let's start by reading Genesis 2:15–17. “Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

We all know the Genesis account of Eve eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and then giving the fruit to her husband, Adam, who also ate (Genesis 3:1–7).

We might ask then: What did this tree represent? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil represented the choice that God gave to His creation. Keep in mind that it was because God loved us that He gave us a choice to live up to His eternal law of life or to choose our own destiny, which would ultimately end in death.

Satan had told Eve that God did not want her to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, because God knew that in the day that she ate it she would “be like God, knowing good and evil” (verse 5). Adam and Eve could trust their Creator God or choose moral autonomy. Satan deceived Eve, but Adam knowingly ate the fruit because his wife had already been deceived into disobeying God. This disobedience caused disorder in God's creation. Thus humanity inherited sin and guilt from Adam and Eve. The Bible says, “Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread

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to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). But the good news is “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9; emphasis added).

I recently read an article in which the writer accused God, not Satan, of being the liar in Genesis 2 and 3. His proof? This writer said that God told Adam and Eve they would “surely die” if they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And since Adam and Eve ate the fruit and did not immediately die, God had lied, and Satan was correct!

Adam and Eve were created to live forever without the effects of sin—sickness, disease, death, and so on. After they disobeyed God by eating from the tree, He removed them from the Garden of Eden, and they eventually died. Because of their disobedience to God, billions of people born on planet Earth over the last 6,000 years have died, and all of us who are alive have suffered the consequences of sin!

### SATAN, THE FATHER OF LIES

We have seen God’s character of love, now let’s find out what the Bible says about the serpent (Satan) and his character. What were Satan’s intentions when tempting Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? In order to answer that, let’s find out a little of Satan’s history—“that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan” (Revelation 12:9). The Bible says, “The devil has sinned from the beginning” (1 John 3:8). “He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44).

Was Satan a created being? Yes, but when he was in heaven, he was a beautiful creature named, “Lucifer” (Isaiah 14:12). Here’s what the Bible says about him:

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“You were the seal of perfection,  
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.  
You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
Every precious stone was your covering:  
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,  
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,  
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.  
The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes  
Was prepared for you on the day you were created.

“You were the anointed cherub who covers;  
I [God] established you;  
You were on the holy mountain of God;  
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.  
You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created,  
Till iniquity was found in you” (EZEKIEL 28:12-15).

Wow! Satan was the anointed cherub! Yet, unrighteousness and evil were found in him. There must have been a reason that Satan rebelled against God and His law of love. Let's find out why Satan sinned and what his sin was. “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor” (verse 17). “You have said in your heart. . . ‘I will exalt my throne above the stars of God . . . I will be like the Most High’ ” (Isaiah 14:13, 14).

Pride and jealousy were in Satan's heart! He wanted to be worshiped in place of God, and, amazingly enough, he found a following among God's created angels. This destroyed the unity of heaven. God cast Satan out of heaven, and one-third of all the angels went with him! “War broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;



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he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him” (Revelation 12:7–9).

Just like Satan, and later Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we have a choice to make. We can trust God and His eternal law of life, or we can choose our own destiny, which will end in death! Do we trust God enough to obey His laws of life? Or do we trust our own moral code, which leads to death? Many people will tell you that the Ten Commandments, the moral law of God, were nailed to the cross when Jesus died. This, of course, is not true. God’s Ten Commandment law will last throughout eternity! It is a transcript of His own character!

I’ve given you the short version of the biblical account of “sin” and how it originated in heaven. We have found out that Satan and one-third of his evil angels were cast down to earth with him. These evil angels are demons that do the work of Satan. What is the work of Satan? “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

There you have it. Satan and his demonic host have one goal in mind—to deceive you into rebelling against God and His Ten Commandment law of love. There’s an old saying that applies here: misery loves company. Satan’s goal is to make void the plan of salvation. Jesus came to earth to implement His excellent plan for fallen man so that no one should perish, but all should have everlasting life (John 3:16).

The choice is ours to make: do we choose to trust and serve God, or do we serve Satan? There is a great controversy going on between Christ and Satan. As human beings, our destiny will either be eternal life with Jesus in a place called heaven or eternal death—separated from God for eternity!

There is no place in between. We only have two choices—heaven or hell. I have met many people who claim that they don’t serve either the Lord or the devil. They believe they don’t have to choose between Christ or Satan. This, too, is a lie of the devil. Please don’t fall into that

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trap! Serving self is actually serving and joining forces with Satan in his rebellion against God, therefore ending in eternal death.

*God, I pray that each person reading this little book will respond to Your Holy Spirit right now as You call each of us to repentance from our sins that we may enter into Your joy!*

The Bible says, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). How beautiful is that? Our Creator God is willing to take our forgiven sins and cast them into the sea of forgetfulness!

## **DIGGING DEEPER.**

There is no better experience than knowing that God has forgiven our sins. We have looked at sin as rebellion against God’s Ten Commandment law; let’s look at what sin does to all creation.

Sin is the cause of all of earth’s problems. Sin destroyed the beauty of God’s perfect, created world, and it has perverted our relationship with Him and with the other inhabitants of our planet! Sin destroys perfection! As we have already stated, every human being born on planet Earth is born with a terminal illness called “death” because of sin. Without God, no one can escape this illness. The wealthiest, most influential people who ever lived have all succumbed to the results of sin—death. Those of us who are alive right now will ultimately face the same outcome unless we are alive when Jesus returns to planet Earth at His second coming.

Yes, sin causes endless sickness, pain, sorrow, disease, depression, and crimes such as rape and murder. There is no end to the list of perverted acts that sin causes people to engage in! Thankfully, no sinner will ever enter heaven. Do we have the assurance that sin will not rise again in heaven? Yes, we do. “He [the LORD] will make an utter end of it. Affliction will not rise up a second time” (Nahum 1:9).

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Satan and all the wicked will be burned up at the end of time, never again to disrupt a perfect universe.

“For behold, the day is coming,  
Burning like an oven,  
And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble.  
And the day which is coming shall burn them up”  
Says the LORD of hosts,  
“That will leave them neither root nor branch” (MALACHI 4:1).

*(For a complete study on the topic of “hellfire,” use the contact information in the back of this book.)*

## SALVATION BEFORE CHRIST?

If Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross was the fulfillment of the plan of salvation, how were people saved in the Old Testament before Christ died on the cross? Was there a way to salvation before Christ came to earth? The answer is yes. Here it is in two Bible verses: “Your way, O God, is in the sanctuary; who is so great a God as our God?” (Psalm 77:13). “And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them” (Exodus 25:8). Isn’t it incredible that the God of the universe would love us enough to come down to earth and dwell among His people?

Consistent with His character of love, God made a way of escape from the curse of eternal death for those living in Old Testament times. In fact, for the children of Israel who had been slaves for 400 years, God drew a picture of His love in a place that He designed called the earthly sanctuary. There is a sanctuary in heaven where Jesus is ever interceding on behalf of His creation before our Father God. He carried the sins of the world to the cross. Now the spotless Lamb stands before the Father in our place. Jesus is our High Priest and advocate! Praise His holy name!

## THE PURPOSE OF THE SANCTUARY

God told Moses to build a sanctuary in the wilderness. The sanctuary shows how God deals with sin. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). God couldn’t change His own eternal law to make sinners not guilty. Sin’s wages must be paid. How would they be paid? There were only two choices—either by the sinner receiving eternal death or by Christ dying on the cross.

What assurance did God give Moses that He made a way for the repentant sinner to escape eternal death? “I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God” (Exodus 29:45). “The tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory” (verse 43). Remember, we are all born sinners. Therefore we all need salvation to escape the curse of death. There is only one way that leads to salvation, and that is through God’s Son, Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). The Bible makes it very clear. When the jailer asked Paul and Silas, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:30, 31). And Peter said of Jesus, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

These texts make it very clear that the only way to be saved is through Jesus Christ. But Old Testament men and women did have a way to salvation through Jesus. Keep in mind that Jesus is part of the Godhead. He is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last! He has no beginning and has no end!

With that in mind, let’s find out how people came to Jesus through the earthly sanctuary in the Old Testament before Christ came to earth in the form of human flesh. I’ll give you the simple version since this little book doesn’t permit a deep study.

God designed the sanctuary. He instructed Moses to build it about the same time that He gave him the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. It measured 75 feet by 150 feet around the outside.

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The outside walls were covered with linen. The sanctuary had only one opening into the courtyard surrounding it. There were no other doors in the entire structure. This is of great significance as it represented that there is only one way to enter into eternal life, and that is through Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture” (John 10:9). The area outside the sanctuary represented the sinful world. Remember, we are all born into an evil world! There is no way of escaping eternal death—except through Jesus Christ! That’s why God had only one door for entering into the sanctuary.

Just as the only way for forgiveness of sins is through the blood of Jesus, the blood from the spotless lambs brought into the sanctuary represented the blood of Jesus Christ. The sanctuary was centered around Jesus. It revealed His incarnation. In other words, the sanctuary pointed to Jesus coming to earth, dwelling among men, and giving His life as an atonement for our sins.

Jesus came to earth in the form of man. God’s glory, His Shekinah glory, was veiled in humanity. Jesus did not come in the form of Adam before the Fall. He came to earth in the form of Adam after the fall of man. This, too, is significant. Jesus came as one of us. He was tempted in all things as we are (Hebrews 4:15, 16). He felt the pain of rejection by His own creation. Yet He loved us enough to fulfill the plan of salvation by living a sinless life in a sinful world!

When we read of Jesus’ crucifixion, it is of utmost importance that every Christian realizes the truth about salvation. No human or earthly government took Jesus’ life. Jesus *gave* His life on the cross for the sins of the world. This is called a substitutionary sacrifice. He took the death we deserve by substituting Himself in our place. Now, through the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross, we can have the eternal life that we do not deserve!

Jesus could have come down from the cross at any time He

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wanted to. It was not the nails that held Jesus to the cross; it was His love that held Him there. He could have called ten thousand angels from heaven to be at His side! But praise His holy name, He chose to die in our place so that we might have life through His righteousness! Yes, the earthly sanctuary is *all* about Jesus and His sacrifice for the redemption of fallen man!

Let's continue our look at the earthly sanctuary. It had a linen cloth that covered its external fence. The entrance into the sanctuary was a veil. It was easy to access, representing that God wanted His people to come to Him for salvation. There were three veils. One was at the entrance to the courtyard (Exodus 27:16; 38:18). The second one was an entrance into the first room of the sanctuary, the Holy Place (Exodus 26:36, 37). And the third veil was into the second room, the Most Holy Place (verses 31–33). The veils to the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place were to shield the people from the presence of God's Shekinah glory. Sinful man cannot stand in the presence of a holy God without being destroyed. When Jesus came to live with us on earth, His glory was veiled by humanity. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory" (John 1:14).

The sanctuary, the courtyard, and the tents surrounding the area are a miniature of the plan of salvation! The entire sanctuary structure, with a veil all around it, with only one entrance, was pointing forward to Jesus coming to earth in human form. The sanctuary reveals the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. There is only one way back to the Father, and that is through Jesus Christ!

The sanctuary represented Jesus coming to earth to dwell among us. God said, "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). Jesus Himself dwelt among His people here on earth.

After returning to heaven, He went into the Holy Place, and later into the Most Holy Place, of the sanctuary in heaven. Did you know that there is, at this moment, a sanctuary in heaven where Jesus is now ever interceding with the Father on our behalf?

## WALKING THROUGH THE SANCTUARY

When the people entered the Old Testament earthly sanctuary, they were in the courtyard. The first object that they encountered was the altar of sacrifice or burnt offering. This altar typified the cross and the sacrifice that Jesus made on our behalf when He “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

In the Old Testament, a person who sinned would take a spotless, young lamb through the door into the courtyard. This spotless, young lamb represented Jesus. Though the lamb was totally innocent, it had to be sacrificed.

The altar of sacrifice represented forgiveness, which could happen only by the shedding of the blood of the spotless lamb. Now when we sin, we can ask Jesus to forgive us—no more shedding of lambs’ blood because Jesus made the supreme sacrifice for you and me on the cross of Calvary!

This is a beautiful representation of the fact that we can have the assurance of salvation as soon as we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior! No theme in the Bible is greater than the story of redemption! God, in His infinite love, rescues the human race from the deadly power of evil and makes a way of redemption, restoring human beings to the perfect image of God! *Praise the Lord!*

The next article of furniture people encountered in the courtyard of the earthly sanctuary was the laver, a washbasin where the priest would wash his hands and feet. This represented baptism. Baptism, of course, symbolizes death to your old spiritual self. You are buried underwater. But when you come up from the water, you are a new creature in Christ Jesus.

There is no courtyard in the sanctuary in heaven. The reason is this: Jesus did the work of the courtyard while He was on earth. He lived with us on earth; He died on earth; and He was resurrected on earth. So, in heaven, the sanctuary has only the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

The Old Testament sanctuary service for the people did not

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end in the courtyard. After the sacrifice had been offered, the priest would then enter the Holy Place. There were three pieces of furniture in this first compartment. On the right was the table of showbread, and on the left was the golden lampstand. Directly in front was the altar of incense. The entire Holy Place represents our continued commitment and our walk with the Lord. It is the process known as “sanctification.”

Just inside the Holy Place on the left (south) side stood the golden menorah, a lampstand with seven branches (see Exodus 25:31–40). These branches held not wax candles as we know them but lamps fueled by pure olive oil. The priests trimmed the wicks daily and refilled the bowls with oil so that the menorah would constantly be a source of light for the Holy Place. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12).

The table of showbread was on the north side. It was constructed of acacia wood and covered with gold (Exodus 25:23–30). On it, the priests kept twelve loaves of unleavened bread (Leviticus 24:5–9).



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These loaves were symbolic of Jesus, who is the Bread of Life. “Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst’ ” (John 6:35, see also verse 48).

The number twelve signified the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of Jesus who were to feed God’s people with the bread of life, which is also a symbol of the Bible. When responding to Satan’s temptations in the wilderness, Jesus said, “It is written, ‘*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*’ ” (Matthew 4:4; emphasis added).

The altar of incense was located directly across from the door to the Holy Place, standing against the veil that separated that room from the Most Holy Place. The altar of incense was made of acacia wood and covered with gold (Exodus 30:1–3). It was smaller than the altar in the courtyard and contained a brass pot that held hot coals from the bronze altar of burnt offering. On this altar, the priests burned a very special blend of incense that filled the sanctuary with a sweet-smelling cloud, representing the believers’ prayers of intercession and confession, sweetened by the Holy Spirit (Exodus 30:8).

The altar of incense signifies that Jesus is our Righteousness. When we pray to the Father, we come in the name of Jesus. The altar of incense represents the prayers of God’s people ascending to the Father through Jesus Christ.

It is so essential for us to understand that the only way we can have access to the Father is when we come in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of the righteousness of Christ that our prayers are acceptable to God.

There is no good in any of us. There is no such thing as a “good” person. We are all as filthy rags when we come before our Heavenly Father.

We are all like an unclean thing,  
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;  
We all fade as a leaf,

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And our iniquities, like the wind,  
Have taken us away” (ISAIAH 64:6).

The Holy Place represents the process of sanctification. The children of Israel could relate to this process as the Bible describes God guiding them by a pillar of fire during the night and a cloud by day (Exodus 13:21). The Holy Place has parallels to the wilderness wanderings of Israel. The pillar of fire was their menorah, and the manna was their showbread. The pillar of cloud was their cloud of incense.

As we've mentioned, sanctification is the process in the Christian's life of learning to obey. Each time we sin, we ask for forgiveness, and we are justified again. However, God offers more than forgiveness when we confess. He promises us that, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

We are cleansed from unrighteousness by Jesus. This is the process of sanctification taking place. We grow in the Lord through the daily study of His Word, prayer, and witnessing. The sanctuary's bread, incense, and lamp represent these elements.

A veil separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Inside the Most Holy Place, or the "Holy of Holies," was only one piece of furniture—the ark of the covenant. This sacred piece of furniture, also constructed of acacia wood and covered with gold, contained the tablets of stone upon which God had written the Ten Commandments. Later, it also held Aaron's rod that had budded and a small pot of manna.

The lid of the ark was called the "mercy seat" (Exodus 25:17), and above it was the shining glory of the Lord or *Shekinah* (which literally means "the dwelling"). This glory radiated between two covering cherubs, or angels, on either end of the ark. The ark of the covenant represented the throne of God and the presence of our almighty God in heaven.

The veil, or curtain, separating the Holy and the Most Holy Places

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of the sanctuary has great significance because it was this veil that was torn in two at the very moment Jesus died on the cross. “Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split” (Matthew 27:51; see also Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45). This symbolized that Jesus’ death ended the need for a Levitical priesthood to mediate between man and God.

The veil represents the body of Jesus. “Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh” (Hebrews 10:19, 20).

Access to the Most Holy Place was possible only by passing through this veil (Hebrews 4:16). The tearing of the veil at the death of the Lamb of God shows that every believer in His atonement now has immediate access to the Most Holy Place through our new High Priest, Jesus Christ. He is the one and only Mediator between man and God!

Are you starting to see the beauty of the earthly sanctuary and how it parallels the sacrifice that Jesus Himself would later make? Isn’t it beautiful that by studying the earthly sanctuary that God instructed Moses to build, we begin to understand what is involved in the coming of His Son, Jesus, to this earth? As we consider the cross of Calvary, we understand Christ’s purpose and plan—to bear the sins of the world on Himself so that through His righteousness every human being could inherit eternal life.

Finally, there are two significant entities in the sanctuary. One is the lamb, and the other is the high priest. Let’s examine their roles in the sanctuary service. We’ll start with what John the Baptist said when he introduced Jesus to the world: “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Jesus is our spotless Lamb represented in the sanctuary service. But He has another role also. Jesus is our High Priest, “Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the

Lord erected, and not man” (Hebrews 8:1, 2).

As we review, we see that every element of the sanctuary points to Jesus. The altar of sacrifice in the courtyard and the laver both symbolize the way to salvation. They represent the cross of Christ and baptism. After that, the Holy Place had the table of showbread (feeding on the Word), the golden lampstand (witnessing), and the altar of incense (prayer). It’s beyond amazing that heaven would come down to earth and that God would dwell among us in the sanctuary! Jesus Christ connects heaven and earth! The sanctuary represents the work of Jesus Christ on our behalf—past, present, and future! Thank You, Jesus!

## JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

The word *justification* is a translation of the Greek *dikaiōsis* (Latin, *justificatio*); it was originally a technical legal term derived from the verb meaning, “to make [someone] righteous.”<sup>1</sup> Justification has been important in the history and theology of the Christian church since the apostle Paul’s time. In the books of Galatians and Romans, Paul asks how one becomes just before God. His answer? Justification does not come by works or by obeying the commandments—God’s law, which in itself is good. A person stands before God, not as righteous but as a sinner entirely dependent on God’s grace. We are all sinners; it is God who calls sinners righteous. When we confess our sins, Jesus Christ stands before God on our behalf, and we are justified. “My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

In human courts of law, only an innocent person is justified. Still, since Jesus is our High Priest, He stands before the Father on our behalf, and the Father renders us “just”! Jesus died for our trespasses and was raised for our justification (Romans 4:25). In this way, the sinner is acquitted from the law, sin, and

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death; is reconciled with God; and has peace and life in Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Bible says,

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation

(ROMANS 5:1-11).

“The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God’s forgiving grace.”<sup>22</sup>

We are justified by Christ’s great sacrifice for each of us. We are justified instantaneously. The repentant sinner is standing before God as though he had never sinned! Justification through Christ does not

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mean that we are now perfect in our own merit. We are still human, living in a sinful world. Satan's attacks against us never stop!

So being a Christian does not mean that you are now exempt from sin! Satan's plan is to turn you away from God by tempting you with the pleasures of sin for a season. But the difference is that through our trust and faith in Jesus Christ, we can now overcome sin and the devil and his temptations.

Sanctification is the growing process in the Christian's life of learning to obey God and keep His commandments. Each time we sin and ask for forgiveness, we are justified again. According to 1 John 1:9, when God forgives our sins He cleanses us from all unrighteousness. It is that cleansing that constitutes sanctification.

It seems to me that if we are growing daily from reading the Word of God and praying and witnessing, we should daily come to resemble the character of Christ more than when we first started our Christian journey. Agreed?

Thank the Lord for the process of sanctification! In our Christian walk with Jesus, we will have ups and downs. There will be times we will be discouraged. There will be times that we fall into temptation as we take our eyes off Jesus. But the good news is that Jesus knows our weaknesses and our failures. And guess what? He also knows our heart's desire to serve Him and to grow in faith and become more and more like Him.

So even after we've been born again, when we fail and come back to the foot of the cross with godly sorrow, Jesus' robe of righteousness will cover our sins once again! Yes, once again we will stand spotless before the Father as Jesus, our Advocate, approaches the Father's throne of grace. What incredible love our God has for His creation! "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Therefore, in your darkest hour, never be discouraged. Failure is not an option. Why not? Because heaven is on your side! Wow! Think about it. All heaven is on our side! The battle for our souls may be raging, but the victory has already been won! Jesus says,

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“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

We have no reason to be discouraged to the point of giving up our Christian walk with the Lord. I love this text:

“No weapon formed against you shall prosper,  
And every tongue which rises against you in judgment  
You shall condemn.  
This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,  
And their righteousness is from Me,”  
Says the LORD (ISAIAH 54:17).

The Bible says, “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). Isn’t this great news? When we express godly sorrow and ask for forgiveness, Jesus will once again stand in the gap for us. I love this text also: “You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). So no matter what the devil throws at you, you can have peace in the midst of the storm! Why? You have read the back of the Book. You don’t have to be discouraged! The back of the Book (the Bible) says that we win! “And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death” (Revelation 12:11). And Luke 10:19 says, “Behold, I [Jesus] give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Thank the Lord for His love and patience through the process of sanctification in which He covers our sins with His righteousness and remembers them no more.

We should never minimize either justification or sanctification. Both are extremely important to the Christian life and experience. As author E. G. White explains, “The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.”<sup>3</sup>



## FAITH AND WORKS

Is salvation by faith alone? Or is salvation by faith plus works? As you may know, this subject has been a source of contention for centuries.

This is, perhaps, the most critical question in all of Christian theology. This question was the cause of the Reformation. Martin Luther believed that salvation was by faith alone. How did Martin Luther's ideas differ from those expressed by the Catholic Church? First of all, he rejected the church's doctrine that good deeds were necessary for salvation. He believed that salvation was achieved through faith alone. Second, Luther upheld the Bible as the sole source of religious truth.

God's Word says that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus and not by our own efforts or works, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Grace alone. Faith alone. "Grace alone" means that God loves, forgives, and saves us—not because of who we are or what we



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do but because of the work of Christ. “Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Romans 3:20). “God’s grace is showered abundantly upon all souls, yet only those who will respond in humility, sincerity, obedience, and unyielding faith in God will be saved. God will provide everything necessary for salvation to those who are willing to be saved. The only contribution we have to the plan of salvation is choosing to accept God’s gift; there’s nothing else. Salvation is free, but we have to demonstrate our faith and sincerity through our works.”<sup>4</sup> Each day, we should spend time in prayer and Bible study, learning more about the One who saved us.

Grace is an attribute of God exercised toward undeserving human beings. We did not seek for it, but it was sent in search of us.

Divine grace is the great element of saving power; without it, all human effort is unavailing. . . .

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live, and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. . . .

Through the grace of Christ, we may accomplish everything that God requires.<sup>5</sup>

What a beautiful description of the grace of God for His creation! He saves us; we cannot save ourselves. All we have to do is accept this free gift of salvation. “Salvation is free, but we have to demonstrate our faith and sincerity through our works.”<sup>6</sup> This means living sanctified lives on a daily basis, consistently reflecting the character of Christ through our words and actions. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). “Keep” is an action word. Once we are genuinely saved, we will serve the Lord by keeping His commandments—whether it is the fourth

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commandment (“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” [Exodus 20:8]) or the fifth commandment (“Honor your father and your mother” [Exodus 20:12]). We will teach others about the goodness of God and share the good news of salvation through Christ. As we are filled with the Holy Spirit, our thoughts, desires, and goals in life will change. We will no longer live for self. We will follow Paul’s counsel:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

“Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things (Philippians 4:8).

So many Christian churches and their leaders put all the emphasis on “getting saved.” Although accepting Jesus Christ as our Savior is the greatest decision we will ever make, getting “saved” is *just the beginning!* Salvation is what God did for us. Now we have the opportunity to show Him and the world how much we love and trust Him by representing and reflecting His character. Jesus says, “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself” (John 12:32).

We just saw in Romans 3:20 and Ephesians 2:8, 9 that salvation is through grace and faith alone. And, of course, this is true. But some people have a hard time reconciling James 2:14–26 with those scriptures. The Bible does not contradict itself. We are saved by grace through faith alone in Christ Jesus. But James tells us that once we are justified through Christ, our spiritual journey has just begun. Yes, good works will follow. Let’s read James 2:14–26,

**What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a**

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brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “*Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*” And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?

For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also (EMPHASIS ADDED).

We can see that Romans and Ephesians are easily reconciled with James. In Romans and Ephesians, Paul makes it clear that we are saved by grace. Period. We can do nothing on our own merit to be saved. Then James explains that once we are saved by grace, our actions and works will show that we are saved.

Doesn't that make sense? Let's look at it with this illustration. Many of you reading this are married. Wives, what if your husband never ever tells you that he loves you or does anything for you? He never seems to remember your birthday, your anniversary, Christmas, and so on. In fact, he never does anything to show

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you that he loves you. You take specific responsibilities around the home. Even though you may work outside the home, you still make sure that you cook for him, clean the house, wash the dishes, and do the laundry.

Your husband comes home from work. Supper is ready for him. He sits down to eat but never comments on the food or your preparation of it. He never mentions the freshly washed clothes. He never tells you he loves you or comments on how good you look when you are all dressed and ready for church. I could go on, but my question to you is this: What if one day, when you finally get up the nerve to ask him if he really loves you, (after all, he has not shown you any real love or affection for many years), he answers, "I told you I loved you when we got married!" Let me ask you: Would that be proof to you that he really loves you? I think your answer will be an emphatic, "No!" Why? It's actually a simple deduction: You love him, and you continue to show him that you love him by your actions years after your marriage. You are putting your love into action! He is not.

It's the same with Christians who get "saved." They believe that they have fulfilled the Bible mandate, that getting saved is simply a matter of "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Yes, we are saved instantaneously when we confess our sins and ask Jesus to forgive us. But, because we are "saved," works will follow. We can't help ourselves. Remember when you first became a Christian and were baptized? Remember how everyone around you saw such a change in your life? You had a holy boldness and wanted to share Jesus with everyone with whom you came in contact!

Sometimes we lose our first love of Jesus. This is why James tells us that faith without works is dead. James is basically saying that if we claim that we are saved and yet have no works to show for it, we are sadly mistaken. We are spiritually dead. The devil has deceived us!

Once we accept God's free gift of salvation, we will be so thankful

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and happy and in love with Jesus that our actions will show it.

I love my wife, my children, and grandchildren. Everyone who knows me well knows that I love them dearly! How do they know? My words and actions show it! It seems I can't help letting them and the world know how much I love them! They are the apple of my eye!

When you fall in love with Jesus Christ, everyone around you will know it. Why? Because you can't seem to stop talking about Him! We can show our love for Jesus in many ways—by keeping His commandments, witnessing, and changing habits in our lives, and so on.

We are not doing all of this to “get” saved. Our talk and our actions show that we *are* saved! Do you see the difference? Yes, James is clear that faith without works is dead.

### ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED?

Let's spend a little extra time on this vital subject as it can mean the difference between being saved or lost! This is another theological topic that knows no end to controversy. So bear with me as we seek the Holy Spirit to focus on the truth about “once saved, always saved.” We have already examined the devil's plan for every person on planet Earth. John 10:10 says it all: “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” I am so glad that Jesus has the last word. He makes it clear that the devil cannot rob us of our salvation or eternity with our Heavenly Father. In the last half of this verse, Jesus continues, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

So, we find out that the devil's real purpose for humanity is “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” Satan has made war on the saints of God: “The dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). This verse is talking about the last-day Christians on earth before Jesus returns at the Second Coming! The devil is the dragon,

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and the woman represents the people who make up the true church of God on earth. The “rest of her offspring” symbolizes those who perfectly reflect the character of Christ. They are the ones the devil hates. Why? Because they testify of Jesus and keep His Ten Commandment law of love!

The devil is a deceiver from the beginning. When we study history, we find that he tried to stamp out Christianity during the Dark Ages. He used the church to kill millions of Christians. But all those millions of deaths of Christians did not stop the spread of Christianity. Why? Christians fled to new places, including the Americas, for religious freedom, and they brought their Christianity with them. Satan could not stamp out Christianity by using the papacy to do his work.

Satan then changed his tactics. Rather than to try to destroy Christians physically, he began to work within the church. If he could get people to take their eyes off of Bible doctrine and substitute the doctrine of men in its place, he would then succeed in his mission to steal, kill, and destroy! Jesus told the religious leaders of His day,

**“You have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:**

*“These people draw near to Me with their mouth,  
And honor Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.  
And in vain they worship Me,  
Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”*

**... Hear and understand” (MATTHEW 15:6-10; EMPHASIS ADDED).**

Jesus is calling us today to hear and understand the truth about salvation. We should realize that everything that sounds like Christianity is not. True doctrine must follow the Word of God, not

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tradition and the commandments of men!

Let's delve into the false teaching of "once saved, always saved," often referred to as "eternal security." Why do I believe that this is one of Satan's greatest deceptions in the Christian church? Because it leads people to think that just because they walked down a church aisle when they were nine or ten years old and surrendered their life to Jesus, they are now still saved regardless of their lifestyle and actions!

This is exactly what the devil wants every Christian to believe. He wants us to believe that we are in a saved condition, even though our thoughts, actions, and deeds demonstrate that we are not living

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a godly life! This theology also does away with the process of sanctification. If we are “once saved, always saved,” then there is no need to continue to grow spiritually and become more like Jesus during our lifetime. According to eternal security theology, just get “saved,” and you cannot lose your eternal life no matter what sinful lifestyle you lead. This is a destructive road that is paved all the way to hell!

Sadly, preachers and Christian denominations promote this deception. Once saved, always saved basically proclaims that Jesus saves us *in* our sins. That is not true. Jesus saves us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins! There is a big difference. In fact, it is a life-and-death difference in our relationship to God and for eternal life. This is why it is so important to know if the “once saved, always saved” doctrine withstands the Bible’s test for truth. The Bible says, “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20). Let’s test this doctrine.

Wikipedia says,

Eternal security, also known as “once saved, always saved,” is the belief that from the moment anyone becomes a Christian, they will be saved from hell, and will not lose salvation. Once a person is truly “born of God” or “regenerated” by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, nothing in heaven or earth “shall be able to separate [them] from the love of God” (ROMANS 8:39) and thus nothing can reverse the condition of having become a Christian.

Eternal security is prominent among Calvinists due to the doctrine of Perseverance of the saints, but it is also found in Free Grace Theology and “free will” Baptist theology. Also in other Protestant churches of the evangelical tradition, particularly within independent fundamental baptism.<sup>7</sup>

Let’s look at some of the Bible texts that some Christians use to “prove” once saved, always saved.



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*John 10:27, 28.* Jesus said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.”

Does this passage really teach “once saved, always saved”? No! It contains wonderful promises for Christians, but notice that Jesus includes three very important words in what He says—“they follow Me.” His promises are conditional upon our continuing to follow Him. Christians who quit following Jesus will not receive these promises.

As we’ve seen previously in this little book, God created human beings with a free will to choose between good and evil. Nothing in John 10:27, 28 says these “sheep” cannot decide to quit following Jesus and become the lost sheep! Think about this. According to “eternal security” theology, if a person gets saved at ten years old, but later decides he loves the way of the world and does not want to go to heaven, he no longer has a choice to be lost!

*1 John 3:9.* “Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.”

Some eternal security supporters point to this text in order to defend their doctrine of “once saved, always saved.” John wrote that a person who is born again does not continue to sin because God’s seed (the Word of God) continues to abide in that person. However, if we allow it, Satan can steal the Word of God out of our heart. In that case, the Word of God does not continue to abide in us. There really are no texts in the Bible that guarantee that it is impossible to turn away from God once a person accepts Jesus.

However, there is a mountain of biblical evidence that proves that every person can choose to “backslide” from being a follower of God, which will end in eternal death unless that person repents. “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Years ago, before I went into full-time ministry, my brother

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and I were carpenters, and we were building a small church in our hometown. Only a block away was a tavern. One of the men working with us made it a habit to regularly stop in the tavern for a drink as soon as we quit work for the day. One day, while working on the church, he told us that he was a Christian. I would never have thought of him as a Christian for several reasons. First, he had what I called “a potty mouth.” It seemed that more curse words came out of his mouth than ordinary words. Second, he would voluntarily talk about his “fun time” at the tavern the previous night. One day, he mentioned that he had succeeded in picking up a certain woman and spending much of the evening with her. He also commented that his wife was upset because he came home so late. He said he told his wife that he and his friends were having a few drinks and playing cards at the tavern.

After hearing this, I couldn't help asking him how he could claim to be a Christian while boasting about living a life of sin. His answer? “I'm saved. I got saved when I was just nine years old.” He also volunteered that although he was drinking almost every night, he was “witnessing for the Lord,” trying to get his drinking buddies to accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of their lives also!

I have to admit that I was stunned by his answer. So I asked him, “What is the difference between you and your drinking buddies who are living in sin?” He told me that even though he didn't live as a Christian, he would still be saved from hell, because he had accepted Jesus in his life at an early age. He also said that was why he felt he was doing good at the tavern—because he wanted his friends to be saved also! He believed in eternal security, once saved, always saved!

Please note that I'm *not* saying that everyone who lives such a contrasting lifestyle believes in eternal security. However, I do know that several Christian denominations promote this doctrine. I've even heard many well-known television evangelists promoting and misrepresenting this lie as a Bible truth!

In preparing for this book, I went to YouTube and watched some

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of these internationally known speakers explain the scriptures that we looked at above in order to “prove” the doctrine of eternal security. When I investigated what these preachers taught, I could see how this young man that I worked with years ago could actually believe that he could live for the devil and still be saved in the end! This unbiblical deception of once saved, always saved was taught by the pastor of his church!

Please forgive me if I sound judgmental. On purpose, I’m not mentioning the names of some of these well-known preachers, since this book is not intended to be an exposé of personalities. This is an exposé of the devil and his plan to destroy the human race. He will use any means necessary, including working within the Christian church. This is why it is imperative that, as Christians, we put on the armor of God to stand against the devil. “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:11–14).

Our only salvation is in righteousness by faith through Jesus Christ!

Now let’s look at some Bible texts that show that we can “backslide” after accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of our life.

*Ezekiel 18:24.* “When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked man does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.”

Did you get that? The text says, “When a righteous man turns away . . .” So this text is referring to a righteous person. And a

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person can be made righteous only by the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one who makes a sinner righteous.

When does Jesus make us righteous? According to the scriptures that we have been studying, He makes us righteous when we ask Him to forgive us of our sins—in other words, when we recognize that we are sinners and “get saved” from the penalty of sin.

So Ezekiel 18:24 is clearly saying that a righteous person—a “saved” person—can turn to sin and die in sin! This is what we commonly call “backsliding”—turning away from Christ our righteousness and serving the powers of darkness.

*Hebrews 10:23–26.* “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.”

When Paul says, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope,” who is he talking to? He obviously is speaking to Christians—those who already profess Jesus Christ—not to nonbelievers. He admonishes us to encourage one another in love and to do good works. Verse 26 says that if we willfully sin after knowing the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins! If there is no more sacrifice for our sins, we will be lost! According to this scripture, we are not guaranteed salvation regardless of how we live.

*1 Corinthians 9:24–27.* “Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

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Here, Paul is saying that he, himself, could backslide and lose the race!

*1 Timothy 4:1.* “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”

I don't see how the Bible could make this any plainer, can you? How can a person “depart from the faith” if he never had faith?

*Hebrews 6:4-6.* “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.”

Once again, the Bible is referring to those who were once enlightened and who turn away from God!

*Philippians 2:12, 13.* “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”

Let me ask you: Does this scripture sound like once you are saved, you are always saved? Paul talks about obedience and about working out one's own salvation with fear and trembling. If you can never be lost, why work out your own salvation with fear and trembling? And verse 13 says that God works in us to do His will and His good pleasure.

The Bible is very consistent in saying that sanctification is the work of a lifetime. All of these verses, and many more, have something in common. They all focus on living a Christian life that rightly represents Jesus. No scripture in the Bible tells us we can live like the devil and still go to heaven. If that is true, shouldn't the devil himself be able to go to heaven when Christ returns to earth?

Think about it. If we follow the belief that once we are saved, we are always saved, wouldn't this include the devil? Satan was created

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in the image of God—perfect, without sin. Then, as we studied earlier, he fell from grace. So does this mean that even though Satan is the great adversary of God and man, he still has salvation assured to him? If so, get ready to meet the devil in heaven!

“That is absurd,” you may say. And yes, I agree 100 percent. Neither Satan nor any of his angels nor any of his followers on earth will go to heaven at the sound of the last trump of God.

Eternal salvation is a lie from the devil that has deceived millions

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of Christians! And the devil accomplished this without physically making war on the saints of God! We already read that the Bible says, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12).

The Bible is clear that we are in a spiritual warfare between the forces of good and evil, and we must choose whose side we are on. If we choose Jesus, then we should be growing spiritually in Him day by day. Our lives should be a witness to the goodness of God so that others will see in our lives the victory that only Jesus can give us!

Joshua 24:15 says, “If it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” And Paul writes, “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

Here’s the good news! Jesus died that none should perish but that all should have eternal life (John 3:16). The choice is ours to make.

### **WHO CAN BE SAVED?**

I will briefly touch on a belief that many Christians espouse: predestination. Several churches teach this as a Bible truth. It was a belief held by the great Reformer, John Calvin. Predestination teaches that before God created the world, He predestined (pre-determined) certain people to be saved (the elect) and the rest to continue in their sins and be damned to the eternally burning fires of hell. According to Calvin, human choice plays no role in salvation. Predestination, as taught by Calvin, is a theory that cannot be supported by Scripture.

One of the primary Bible passages used to support this view is Romans 8:29, 30. “Whom He [God] foreknew, He also predestined

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to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

We have spent considerable time in this book reading many scriptures about God’s love for fallen men and women and His plan of salvation to restore them once again into His perfect image. As John 3:16 says, this plan is for “whoever believes in Him [Jesus].” Also, 1 Timothy 2:4 says that God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Does God know who is going to be saved or lost? Of course, He does. Does He choose some to be saved and some to be lost in advance of their birth? Absolutely not!

I can choose to end my life today by stepping out in front of a semitruck traveling 65 miles an hour down the highway. If I chose to do that, would God know in advance that I would commit suicide on that very day, in exactly that way? Absolutely, He would know in advance. Did He predestine me to die that way? Or did I choose to die that way?

My point is this: God, in His omniscience, knows the final destiny of every person born on planet Earth. He has known this from the foundation of the world. But He created us free moral agents. This means that we can choose to spend eternity with God or we can choose to spend eternity separated from God.

Let’s read what the last book of the Bible has to say about who can be saved. “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

Salvation is a free gift from God to all humanity. Please choose it today.

I believe that God has people in all churches. And, as we can tell from reading about the thief on the cross, there will be people in heaven who have never set foot in a church. We are not saved by carrying the name “Christian.” We are not saved because we keep



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all the commandments of God. We are not saved because we are members of any particular church. We are not saved because we might be a “good” person. We cannot earn our way to heaven by doing penance or working our way there. We have learned in this book that salvation is free because God loved us enough to give His own Son as an atonement for our sins!

We’ve covered a lot of information here. I believe that it is no accident that this book found its way into your hands and that you have read it. I don’t believe in coincidence; I believe in divine providence! God has a plan for each of our lives, including yours!

Someone once said the following to me, and now I want to pass it on to you: “When Jesus was hanging on the cross, you were on His mind! He could look down the stream of time and see a people who loved Him enough to give their lives unto death if necessary for the cause of God.”

Maybe you have tried everything to find real peace and happiness in your life but have not experienced it. Perhaps you’ve made some awful decisions that have had long-term effects on your life. I’m here to tell you that Jesus is the answer to this world’s problems today. In fact, He is the answer to all of *your* problems!

Jesus loves you; He gave His life for you. And He’s coming back to this earth to claim all of those who have surrendered their lives to Him. I’ve had people say to me, “I’d be a Christian, but I have to give up too much.” I tell them, “Yes, we all give up things to follow Christ. We give up guilt, fear, worry, stress, depression, and so on.” With Jesus, we can replace all of our past with hope, peace, contentment, and joy for today and the future.

Yes, we will still go through the storms of life, but the Lord will be right there with us to give us peace in the midst of the storms! And praise the Lord, as long as we have breath, it is not too late to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You can start all over *today!* Praise His holy name!

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## FIVE STEPS TO SALVATION

Perhaps as you have been reading this booklet, you have decided to give your heart to Jesus. But maybe you aren't sure just how to do that. Where do you begin? Well, here are the five steps to salvation:

*Step 1: Recognize your condition.* We are all sinners, and we are powerless to overcome sin without Christ! It is His righteousness alone that will save us—not our own. Indeed, our own righteousness is as “filthy rags.” Isaiah says,

But we are all like an unclean thing,  
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;  
We all fade as a leaf,  
And our iniquities, like the wind,  
Have taken us away” (ISAIAH 64:6).

And Paul brings our spiritual condition without Christ into even sharper focus:

This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But you have not so learned Christ, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness (EPHESIANS 4:17–24).



We can see who we are without Christ in our lives! We can try to be good, but we're not saved by what we do. We're saved by who we know: Jesus! Besides, we can never be good enough. There is *nothing* that we can do to merit salvation. It is a free gift from God to us to set us free from the power of sin and to give us eternal life. Without this free gift, we are doomed. We are free moral agents, and we can accept or reject this precious gift. Acceptance means life. Rejection means eternal separation from God and death. You must recognize your need for a Savior to deliver you from sin and death. Jesus, alone, is the answer.

*Step 2: Repent.* Now that you recognize your condition as a sinner, you must repent. Acts 3:19 says, "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."

To repent means more than having sincere regret or remorse for your sins. Wikipedia states, "The repentance (*metanoia*) called for throughout the Bible is a summons to a personal, absolute and

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ultimate unconditional surrender to God as Sovereign. Though it includes sorrow and regret, it is more than that. . . . In repenting, one makes a complete change of direction (180 degree turn) toward God.”<sup>8</sup> From this statement, we see that repentance involves a change of direction. Instead of going our own way, we submit to moving in God’s direction.

Repentance and receiving the promised Holy Spirit go hand in hand. At Pentecost, Peter told the people: “Repent and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38, 39). It is the Holy Spirit who places the very thoughts of God into your mind, teaching you His ways and convicting you of sin. Jesus said, “Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:7, 8, ESV).

The Holy Spirit is Jesus’ presence in us, leading us to righteousness and repentance. It is how He lives through us to will and to do His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

What sins have been controlling you? Ask the Lord to reveal to you your heart’s true condition. Ask Him to show you what stands as a barrier between you and Him, and repent of those things that He brings to your mind. Ask Him to forgive you of those sins and all sin in your life. Then be determined, by His grace, to do a 180-degree turn toward God, following His leading in your life.

*Step 3: Confess and profess.* There are two definitions of the word *confession* that apply here: (1) “a formal admission of one’s sins with repentance” and (2) “a statement setting out essential religious doctrine.”<sup>9</sup> In this case, the word, *confession*, is synonymous with the word, *profession*. To profess is to “proclaim or declare openly; to confess one’s faith in or allegiance to [something or someone].”<sup>10</sup>

Repentance (step 2) involves the confession of our sins before

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God. The Bible promises, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). So, lay it all out there at the feet of Jesus, asking His forgiveness.

Now you are to make a confession, or profession, of your faith in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul wrote: “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). This means that you tell Jesus that you accept His sacrifice on your behalf and that you know He died and was resurrected.

*Step 4: Believe.* Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ paid the price for your sins? Do you believe that He was resurrected from the dead? Mark 16:16 says, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.” Jesus Himself said, “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38). And, again, Romans 10:9 tells us that if we believe in our hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead, we will be saved.

*Step 5: Commit.* Now that you have repented of and confessed your sins, professed the Lord Jesus Christ with your lips, and believe that He died and rose again, you have to commit to growing in Him through various spiritual disciplines. Baptism, Bible study, prayer, witnessing, and finding a Bible-based church are crucial for spiritual growth. This is a new love relationship, and like earthly love relationships, you must spend time in the company of your Beloved. This is how the relationship will grow and flourish. Remember, sanctification is the work of a lifetime. Growth is a process. As frail human beings, we make mistakes, but when we do, “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1).

Don't get discouraged! Now that you've committed your life to Jesus, and as you abide in Him (John 15:4-7), He makes Himself responsible for your progress. Paul tells us that we can be confident “that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6). Our God is a faithful God!

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You *cannot* be lost if you abide in Him!

So let's pull this all together with a prayer for salvation. If you've never prayed this prayer before, please do so now. It will be the best decision you've ever made! If you're already a Christian, why not recommit your life to Jesus?

*“Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I repent and turn away from my sins. I invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust You and follow You as my Lord and Savior.”*

My prayer is that God will use this little book to help you to see that you are loved by a Creator who wants a personal relationship with each of His children. Salvation is God's gift—a free gift to us—but one that is very expensive to God. It cost Jesus His life! You have nothing to lose by turning your life over to Jesus, but you have eternal life to gain!

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is the founder and corporate consultant of Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN), a worldwide media ministry that encompasses television and radio. Danny is also a composer, singer, and writer. He is a best-selling author with more than 20 million books in circulation.

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