

SALVATION AND THE PUBLIC INVITATION

by Max Younce

A work addressing the proclamation of salvation and the practice of public invitation in evangelistic ministry, examining the theology and methodology of altar calls and public responses to the gospel message.

23 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. Preface
2. Foreword
3. A Blessing Or A Curse?
4. Mat_7:15-23
5. What Salvation Is And What It Is Not!
6. Works Alone, Known As Legalism.
7. Man's Religion Vs. God's Word
8. Faith and Works, A Form of Galatianism
9. Faith Alone, God's Plan of Salvation
10. Examination Of Verses Used To Justify The Public Invitation
11. Explanation of Mat_10:32-33 :
12. Explanation of Rom_10:9-10.
13. Rom_10:13-14
14. The Invitation
15. Lordship Salvation
16. The Person Who Has No Desire To Be Saved.
17. The Problem
18. The Proposed Invitation
19. "Whenever Christ Called People, He Called Them Publicly"
20. Terminologies
21. Introduction
22. The Soul, Spirit, and Heart Explained
23. Terminology Explained

Preface

PREFACE When we, as Christians, speak about or refer to God's Word, we should always strive to present it in simplicity. The greatest evangelist ever known, the Apostle Paul, stated in 2 Corinthians 1:12...

"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in SIMPLICITY and godly sincerity; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

Satan loves nothing more than to add something to God's simple plan of salvation so the listener will be blinded to the simplicity in Christ. Paul warned the Corinthians of this in 2 Corinthians 11:3...

"But I fear, least by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ."

Dr. Younce has written this book to answer the use of the Public Invitation. This book is easy to read, examining many difficult Scriptures, and challenging you to search the Scriptures for yourself. Will you accept that challenge and read "Salvation And The Public Invitation"?

Foreword

FOREWORD As a lost person views the religious atmosphere today, is it any wonder he sees it as a commercial business? He observes all sorts of denominations, each claiming their interpretation of the Bible is correct. During my boyhood affiliation with several churches, a logical question came to my mind. If all churches and ministers seek to direct us to the way of eternal life, then why do so many disagree with each other? My conclusion, as a boy, was that either God's Bible was so complicated that no one could understand it, or churches were using the Bible as a front for something which I did not understand. As a boy I attended several churches, was baptized several times, sang in the choir, and partook of the various activities they presented. As I like to say, "I was baptized so many times the frogs knew my Social Security number!" When I reached the age of fifteen I had the premonition that churches were good for some people but I could never make the grade. I could not understand how preachers could expect everybody to be so good. I did not really want to be bad, but it just seemed to come naturally!

After graduating from high school, I attended another denominational church for the sole purpose of playing basketball on the church team. This man's preaching corroborated what I had heard before. That is, if you are good enough and try the best you can, God will allow you entrance in Heaven some day. I cannot recall a single time when I was told that simply trusting the payment Christ made for my sins was sufficient for eternal life. I am not saying it was never stated from the pulpit, but if it was, it certainly was not emphasized enough for me to remember.

When I was twenty-four, a minister visited our home one night and, for the first time in my life that I can remember, he told me that I could know that I was going to Heaven. He said I could know this by simply trusting Jesus Christ as the One who has paid for my sins. I could not believe salvation was that simple and that I could know I had eternal life without doing something!

The only thing I had ever heard was a mixture of things that I had to do. One preacher would say, "Lay all on the altar," or "Step out and meet Jesus in the front." Yet I had never seen Christ once in the front of the church. Others would say, "Turn or burn." Others claimed that if I took that first step into the aisle, the Lord would be with me the rest of the way. I often wondered why the Lord would not be with me before I took the first step instead of waiting until after. Truthfully, I was not about to step out in front of all those people for anything, so hearing a man now tell me I could go to Heaven without doing anything was truly something new. I told him it sounded too good to be true, but if he could show that to me in the Bible I would believe it.

He turned to Ephesians 2:8-9 which read:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

I trusted Christ right then, without even bowing my head or praying. I just realized that God loved me enough to pay for my sins and all God wanted me to do was trust Christ as my Savior. I knew I would be a fool not to do so.

I remember asking him about confessing all of my sins and I heard something for the first time. He said, "You could never go to Heaven by confessing all of your sins because you cannot remember all your sins to confess." I had never thought of that before. As I began to read the Bible things began to clear up about how simple salvation really was. Adding a few words that did not appear in the Bible changed the whole invitation. The statement that, "If I would take the first step down the aisle, Christ would save me" did not make sense after I had just heard a message that you were saved by doing nothing. Why would Christ have me do something before He would save me, when he already did everything to save me before I was born? Romans 5:8 refutes this kind of invitation:

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." - John 1:12 The Bible does not say to receive Christ by stepping out into an aisle, but rather to receive Him by FAITH.

After graduating from Bible college and pastoring in Indiana, I was out visiting one day and was told by five or six people, on the same day, that they would never come to our church again. When I asked why, they said it was because they were tired of having someone trying to get them down to the front of the church. Of course, not all said the same words; but, every case centered around the invitation at the end of the service.

I explained that it was not coming down an aisle that saves a person; but, trusting Christ as Savior, and they could do that anywhere. They said this was not the impression they were given. In some cases, someone had leaned over, or tapped them on the shoulder, and said they would go to the front with them, if they would go. Some were embarrassed when people approached them to go forward. It was not until this day that I fully realized what a detriment the emphasis on coming forward had on people! When you run into several cases in one day of people that will not come to church because they have been embarrassed and made to feel that coming forward had something to do with salvation; then, is it not time to realize that a tradition may be damning many people to Hell? I am afraid that we are not soon willing to realize this.

I pray the Scriptures set forth will illuminate our traditions that we practice and make us aware of the effect they may have on the lost. We are living in a time when many can be won to Christ if we will only present the Gospel the way the Bible gives it, that is—in its simplicity.

"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." - 2 Corinthians 3:12

If the statements forthcoming are not supported by Scripture in its context, then they most surely should be discarded. Your idea, or mine, of how to do something is not really what counts when it comes to dealing with precious souls on their way to Hell. Let us now lay aside traditional practices and humanistic ideas and look solely to "Thus saith the Lord."

-- Dr. Max D. Younce

A Blessing Or A Curse?

A BLESSING OR A CURSE? Is the public invitation

A blessing or a curse?

It's the church's new tradition

That leads to something worse.

It adds an element of "doing,"

To something that is "done."

Adding works to God's amazing grace,

Confusing almost everyone.

"It wasn't easy for Our Lord;

It shouldn't be easy for you."

The trouble with their statement is,

It simply isn't true." The hard part was the Savior's death,

It's finished, and victory's won.

The easy part is to just receive

What on the cross was done.

"If you want to know the way to Heaven,

Christ comes with you all the way."

When you get to the front of the church,

What will the "personal worker" say? Will he say Christ died to pay for your sin,

And that payment must be received?

Or, will he mix the gospel with works

And the seeker goes home deceived.

Preach the gospel from the pulpit,

Preach it loud and clear,

With words easy to be understood

By every listening ear. And you will reach that timid one,

Too shy to step out of his pew.
Tell them Christ died to pay for their sin,
None can explain it better than you.
Pastor, tell people they can trust the Lord
Wherever they happen to be.
Don't play games with people's souls
And risk their eternity.
If you want to be a reaper,
Plant God's seed God's way.
And you will reap the harvest
In Heaven on that day.
Don't count the numbers on the wall;
They just don't tell the story.
For those who fear the altar call
Might not make it into Glory!

Poem: A Blessing Or A Curse?, Page xiv, by Marjorie A. Younce

" He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." - John 3:18 God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

Mat_7:15-23

Matthew 7:15-23 "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." (15) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (16) Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (17) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (18)

...Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (20)

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (21)

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (22) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (23) God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

What Salvation Is And What It Is Not!

I. WHAT SALVATION IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT!

We must keep in mind that men may propose several methods concerning eternal life; but, God states there is only one way to Heaven. The bridge between earth and Heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ who is God's payment for the sins of the world. (John 3:16). In 1 Timothy 2:5 we are told, "...there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

God did not leave salvation to the discretion of man in making an offer to God for his sins. He, instead, offered His Son who,

"...was wounded for our transgressions; he (Christ) was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him (Christ); and with his stripes we are healed." - Isaiah 53:5 Could it be any clearer than found in John 14:6,

"Jesus saith unto him (Thomas), I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (Christ)."

Or,

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." - 1 John 5:20 When you ask someone this question, "Are You Going to Heaven?", you will usually get one of three answers. Here are the three possibilities:

Works alone, known as Legalism

Faith and Works, a form of Galatianism

Faith alone, God's Plan of Salvation

Two are proposed by man and one by God. Let us examine each according to the Bible and find out which way is the guarantee of eternal life.

Works Alone, Known As Legalism.

1. Works Alone, Known As Legalism.

This group claims that salvation is by our good works alone without faith in Christ. That is, we just follow Christ's example and pattern our lives after Him. This is held to by the modern day liberals and modernists. When we say, "without faith in Christ" we do not mean they do not believe in Jesus Christ. They believe in Him as a good man and may even call him "Saviour" and "Redeemer," but they do not trust Him as God's complete payment for their sin.

These will often quote James 2:19 to substantiate their position. We will quote this verse later with its explanation. Now let us see what the Bible says about going to Heaven on our own good works.

A. Will Keeping the Law Give Eternal Life?

In Romans 3:19-20 we are told,

"Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." The law was given to shut the mouth of every person who claims to be justified by it, because no one has ever kept it in its entirety. James 2:10 makes that perfectly clear, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

B. The Law Shuts Every Mouth From Boasting

In Romans 3:28 we are told, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Romans 3:27 explains that one would only brag and boast of their own good works.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith."

C. How Was Abraham Justified?

The Answer to this question is found in Romans 4:1-5. In Romans 4:1 we read, "What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?"

"Pertaining to the flesh" means, what had Abraham found concerning doing good works of the flesh. In Romans 4:2 we read, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." This answers Romans 4:1, that if Abraham wants to offer his good works to God to be justified, then go ahead, but do not give God the glory. Why? Because this excludes God as having any part in your justification as you have tried to justify yourself. If you have offered your good works to God for your justification, then go ahead and glory, but do not glory before God for you have excluded Him as having any part in the salvation you think you have!

Now let us see what God has to say in Romans 4:3 concerning Abraham, or anyone, who seeks to justify themselves.

"For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

God gave him the righteousness he needed for eternal life because of his belief. What did he believe? Galatians 3:8 tells us,

"And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying in thee shall all nations be blessed." The Gospel according to 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"... Moreover, Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I have preached unto you (1) ... how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures: (3) And that he (Christ) was buried, and that he arose again the third day according to the scriptures." (4)

In Genesis 15:5-6, God promised Abraham he would have a child and his seed would multiply even to the number of the stars in heaven. Remember, this would have to be a supernatural birth because both Sarah and Abraham were past the years of fertility and sexually impotent to have a child naturally. Abraham believed God's promise of a supernatural birth concerning his son. Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. (Hebrews 11:11 and Genesis 21:5).

After Isaac was born, the boy grew and God tested Abraham by asking him to offer Isaac, by death, as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:1-24). Abraham obeyed God, believing He would raise him from the dead. Isaac was a figure of Christ by his supernatural birth and resurrection. Isaac was considered dead and resurrected in the eyes and mind of Abraham. This is the gospel Abraham believed, the supernatural birth and resurrection of Isaac, a figure pointing to the future death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

Hebrews 11:17-19 says,

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son. (17) Of whom it is said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: (18) Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure (of Christ)" (19) Again, Romans 4:3,

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

In Romans 4:4 we read,

"Now to him (Abraham or anyone) that worketh is the reward (God's righteousness and eternal life) not reckoned of grace, but of debt." In other words, if God would grant us eternal life for our good works, it would be because of a debt he owed us, and not because of His grace and mercy. God owes us nothing, but rather, we owe Him everything. He will not accept any works on our part until we first accept the gift of His righteousness, eternal life by simple faith in Christ. In Romans 4:5 we read,

"But to him that worketh not but believeth on Him (Christ) that justifieth the ungodly (you and I), his faith is counted for righteousness."

D. The Demons Believed; But, Too Late!

In James 2:19 we read, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils (demons) also believe, and tremble. The word "devils" should be translated demons, for there is only one devil; but, many demons. The reasoning of the legalist is simple: if the demons believe the same as we do, then they should be saved also. In support of a works salvation, it is also pointed out that the word "believe" in James 2:19 comes from the same Greek word as "believe" in John 3:16 which states,

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

Now, if the demons believe and tremble, we must have to do more than just believe, for they believe; but, all their thoughts and works are bad. We must have good works to be saved is the claim of the modernists, liberals, and others.

How does a child of God answer such a claim? There is no question that the demons also believe that Jesus died for the sin of the world, exactly as we do. The question is—WHEN DID THEY BELIEVE? A boy in school may think he can whip another boy smaller than he. Finally, they get into a fight and the bigger boy gets beaten up. If you were to ask the bigger boy now if he believes the smaller boy can whip him, he will tell you, "Yes." The point is, he didn't believe it before the fight, but he sure does now! He is a believer now, but only after he lost the fight. The demons are those angels that followed Lucifer when he said in his heart,

"I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of congregation, in the sides of the north: (13) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the most high" - Isaiah 14:13-14 Now in Isaiah 14:15 God says, "Yet thou shalt be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the pit." In Matthew 25:41 we are told that God created the everlasting fire for the devil and his angels (now demons).

"Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Their sentence is already passed. Do they believe it? Absolutely! Remember, some of the most wicked demons are chained in place called "Tartarus" awaiting their final destiny in everlasting fire (2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 1:6). The demons that are not chained know this and believe. They also believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Mark 5:1-43);but, they believed too late. They should have joined the angels that believed and followed God, instead of following the Devil. You see, they believe now because they have seen God's judgment; but, now it is too late.

A good example of this is given in Luke 16:1-31, where a rich man who was an unbeliever died. Upon entering Torment, he changed his mind and began believing. Let's read the record in Luke 16:22-24,

"...the rich man also died, and was buried; (22) And in Hell (Hades), he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off (23) ...And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I

am tormented in this flame." (24) Now, notice in Luke 4:27-28,

"Then he (rich man) said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: (27) For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." (28) The rich man who was lost, believed; but, he believed too late. His destiny was already begun. The demons believe; but, they have believed too late, their judgment has already been pronounced. Do not wait until it is too late (death). Here is God's warning in 2 Corinthians 6:12, "Behold now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation,"

...because tomorrow may never come. One will not be in Torment one second until they believe, but they will have believed too late. Yes, the demons also believe, and no wonder they tremble, looking only to the sure judgment of everlasting fire, because they believed too late.

"...Now is the accepted time..."

E. "Fatherhood of God & The Brotherhood of Man."

The following is a bit confusing but, nevertheless, held to by most legalists and modernists. They claim the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. That is, that God is the Father of everyone and everyone is a brother to everyone else. This is one of the most damnable doctrines set forth and one of the most confusing for it is contradictory to itself.

It is said that one has to have good works to go to Heaven; then, how can God be your Father unless you have good works? On the other hand, if He is already the Father of everyone, why have good works? or faith? Because we are all going to Heaven anyway. This is the social gospel, a deadly snare to all who have put their confidence in man's theology instead of the teaching of God's Word. (Psalms 118:8).

Let us turn to the Word of God where this philosophy is exposed as the wisdom of the world, 1 Corinthians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Proverbs 14:12.

"For the preaching of the cross (Christ died for our sins) is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (18) ... For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (21) "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." - Proverbs 14:12 The natural man's reasoning in saying God is the Father of all denies God's judgment and exalts one's own righteousness. Instead of being a child of God, the Bible says we "were the children of wrath." In Ephesians 2:3 we read

"...we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath."

If we were at some time the children of wrath, it is clear we have not always been the children of God.

John 1:12 clearly reveals how we become a child of God.

"But as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he (God) power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name."

If everyone is already a child of God, then who is left to "become the children of God?" As a child is physically born into a family, so is the child of God spiritually born into God's family when he, or she, receives Christ as their personal Savior. This is what John 3:3 is speaking about.

"...Except a man be born again (literally "from above") he cannot see the kingdom of God."

He must be born of the water and of the Spirit. The word "water" here is not referring to water baptism; but, the Word of God. When all believers are spoken of collectively as His Church, the Word of God is referred to as cleansing water. Notice in Ephesians 5:25-26,

"...as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." When God speaks of believers individually, He uses the same terminology applying to cleansing and washing as that accomplished by His Word. In John 15:3 we are told, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you."

Upon acceptance of Christ as our sin-bearer, we are cleansed (or, "clean through the Word") eternally from making that payment ourselves in Hell. Simultaneously upon belief in Christ, God indwells each believer with the Holy Spirit as His down payment; or, assurance of our inheritance in Heaven. It could be no clearer than set forth in Ephesians 1:13-14,

"...in whom after that ye believed, Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. (13) Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (14)

We are born into God's family as a child by believing His Word concerning Christ; therefore, being clean through the Word.

F. The Testimony of Cornelius

Cornelius was a Gentile who would be acclaimed by the liberals and modernists today as a true Christian, accepted of God. Acts 10:1-2 describes him.

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."

Here was a man who was very sincere and prayed to God always, but was still lost and on his way to Hell. He did not know that the Messiah had been here and risen again and only faith in Him would save. One thing about Cornelius—he would accept the truth of God's word in lieu of his own ideas of reaching God. God, knowing this, arranged for Cornelius to hear the truth so he would be saved. God instructed him to send to Joppa for a man named Simon Peter, which he did. When Peter arrived in Caesarea, Cornelius told him "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" - Acts 10:33 b Peter then told him about Jesus Christ, the Cross and His Resurrection. In Acts 10:43 we read,

"To him (Christ) gave all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." As soon as Cornelius heard the truth, that trusting in Christ granted remission of sins; he believed and was indwelt with the Holy Spirit, the evidence of his eternal life. The record is in Acts 10:44, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on

all them which heard the word."

Those with Cornelius also believed and were saved.

Notice that Cornelius did not try to justify himself by telling Peter of all the good works he had done, or of the money he had given, or the prayers he had prayed. He did not try to argue or twist the words. He had heard the truth; so, he believed. How unlike the modernists today who try to exterminate God's grace and exalt their own righteousness to justify themselves.

There are many today just like Cornelius. They are religious, they pray, give money to the poor, are of good character; but are still lost.

Maybe you are one like Cornelius. You try to live the best that you can, you are honest, you would not hurt anyone purposely; and these things are good. In fact, the world would be a better place to live if these characteristics were prominent in more people. But these qualities in a person will never keep him from eternal damnation. The wages of one single, solitary sin, not sins—but sin, singular, qualifies us for eternal condemnation. Romans 6:23 concludes that "The wages of sin (singular, just one) is death..." That is the reason no one has ever been able to qualify himself for eternal life. Since no one could ever qualify; the only way anyone could have eternal life would be if it were offered as a free gift. This is exactly what God says, "For the wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." - Romans 6:23 When Peter returned to Jerusalem, the Jews questioned him about associating with the Gentiles (Cornelius and his friends) at Caesarea. Peter reiterated what had taken place. Peter tells them what Cornelius told him upon entering his house. The record in Acts 11:13-14 is,

"And he (Cornelius) showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter, (13) Who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (14)

God made sure Cornelius heard the truth by sending Peter with His Word. Maybe God has sent His Word via this book for you; and, like Cornelius, you can see the truth and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that "thou shalt be saved."

Cornelius believed immediately when he heard God's Word.

"Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation."

Why? Tomorrow you may not be here. Will you right now trust Jesus Christ as your Savior before it is too late?

G. What Are You Trusting In For Salvation?

Are you trusting a man-made religion with its poisonous ingredients of a false philosophy, social acceptance, a distorted God, a deleted Bible, and corrupt theology. This all encompasses a works righteousness by self-reformation. You and I have a choice to make. Will we believe man's theories and ideologies; or God's infallible Word which "liveth and abideth forever"?

Below are a few contrasts between man's religion and God's Word.

Man's Religion Vs. God's Word

MAN'S RELIGION VS. GOD'S WORD

1. Man is not really bad| "For we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." - Romans 3:23|

2. Hell is not literal, just an imagination of the mind |"The rich man also died... and in Hell he lift up his eyes...and he cried and said, send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame."-Luke 16:22-31|

3. God is the Father of everyone.|"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God..." - John 1:12

|

4. Just try to do the best you can and God will understand and you will be all right. | "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteous-nesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." - Isaiah 64:6|

5. God does not punish because He is a loving God.|"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into ever--lasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." -Matthew 25:41|

6. By showing our love, this will make others want to do better; and make the world a better place in which to live. |"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (1) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (2) Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (3) Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." -2 Timothy 3:1-4|

7.Our love will bring about a Utopia of peace.|"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruc-tion cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." - 1 Thessalonians 5:3

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In Proverbs 14:12; Proverbs 16:25 the Word of God lets us know that "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

If we say we believe the Bible, then let us simply listen to God and trust what He said concerning eternal life. Then, and only then, can we have full assurance of our eternal destiny.

Let me illustrate: If you went out to buy a home and paid the owner his asking price, you would then have a right to possess that home. On the other hand, you have looked at a home that you wanted to buy, but found that it was not for sale. Then you inquired and were told by the owner

that under no circumstances or for any amount of money could the home be purchased. The owner advised you he was going to give the home, free and without charge, to his children simply because he loved them. In Heaven (God's House), there are many mansions but none are for sale. God owns Heaven and He has a right to do with it as He sees fit. You cannot buy your right to go and live there with money or good works. By receiving God's pay-ment for our sins, the Lord Jesus Christ, He then freely gives us our home in Heaven. When we receive Christ as Savior we become His children (John 1:12). God will not sell his children a home in Heaven; but, He will give it to them absolutely free, simply because He loves us that much. The fact we cannot redeem ourselves, our relatives, or friends with money paid to a priest, church, or any religious organization is clearly stated in Psalms 49:6-7 "They that trust in their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." When we get to Heaven, it will only be by God's grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 states...

"For by grace are ye saved (from Hell) through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, least any man should boast." In John 10:1 we are told

"Verily, verily I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door (Christ), into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief or a robber."

Why would one be a thief or a robber? Because eternal life is not for sale with money or good works. It is an obtainment, a free gift through faith in Jesus Christ; and never an attainment by good works of our own.

Faith and Works, A Form of Galatianism

2. Faith and Works, A Form of Galatianism.

This group mixes faith and works predicated on James 2:17, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Their philosophy is a bit confusing when analyzed; for they say one thing and hold to another. They claim emphatically that one is saved by grace; BUT, if you do not have good works, you are not really saved. They emphasize that when you are saved, your life will change immediately. This is based on 2 Corinthians 5:17 which reads

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

We will discuss this verse at length a little later. In Romans 11:6 we are told...

"And if by works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." In other words if eternal life is by grace; it is by grace alone. If it is by good works, then it is by good works 100% and not one bit of God's grace is involved. Salvation is either 100% by grace or entirely by works, not a mixture of the two, no matter how little of each we try to add. If we take the Word of God as our Authority, the answer becomes clear. Let us consider the following...

A. There Are No Contradictions In God's Word.

If James 2:17 means that we are lost eternally unless we have good works, then God definitely contradicts Himself for Romans 4:3 states "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." In Romans 4:5, God makes it clear that Abraham was justified and declared righteous without good works,

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

Salvation is by faith alone; or, faith and works; one of these two ways.

B. Only One Way to Heaven!

God does not give two formulas for eternal life. THERE IS ONE WAY ONLY. In John 14:6 we are told "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The Word of God does not say "You are the way," but that "Christ is the way." Not what you may try to do by your good works, your way; but the good and perfect work Christ did when He died to pay for our sins. The only way is faith in Christ's finished work, and not our own works of righteousness, so called (Titus 3:5). We come to the Father only by trusting in what He did for us; not on what we can do for Him.

C. The Conclusion - Abraham Believed God For Righteousness

Notice carefully that Romans 3:4 states...

"For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This is a direct quote from Genesis 15:6. This is when Abraham was saved by faith without works. This was Abraham's justification in GOD'S EYES for salvation. God does not need works to know we are saved, but man does.

Now, notice again in James 2:17, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

James continues and illustrates this point by using Abraham as an example,

"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"

James refers here to a different time in Abraham's life, many years after he was saved. This record is found in Genesis 22:1-24. This is justification in MAN'S EYES. If we say we are Christians and our way of living does not back it up, then no one will believe our testimony. We must have good works to substantiate our faith; or, our testimony will be dead and lifeless as far as anyone believing what we say. When we claim to be a Christian, our lives are always watched by someone.

D. Abraham Was Watched.

In Genesis 22:1-24 when Abraham offered Isaac, he was being watched by the two men he had taken with him, "And Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took TWO of his young men with him..." - Genesis 22:3

They, no doubt, heard Abraham many times testifying of God's grace, goodness, and provisions. Now they were watching every minute to see what Abraham was going to do.

Abraham offered Isaac and God honored his faith by providing a ram sacrifice. These two men, along with people today, will only believe what we say if they can see it by the way we live. If our life substantiates our faith; then, we are JUSTIFIED IN MAN'S EYES as they believe our testimony, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified (in other people's eyes), and not by faith only" - James 2:24

1. Romans 4:3

In the light of the context there is definitely not a con-tradiction between Romans 4:3 and James 2:17. In Romans 4:3 we read, "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness."

Again, this is referring to Genesis 15:3 when Abraham was saved by faith without works. This is his justification before God—Salvation.

2. James 2:17; James 2:24; James 2:21 :

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone (17) ...Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only (24) ... Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar." (21)

Here James refers to Genesis, Chapter 22, a time years after Abraham was saved. This he used to illustrate that testimony without works will fall dead and lifeless to the ears of the lost. If our

works back up our faith, then men justify our testimony as being true. James is talking about our justification before men.

"Even so faith if it hath not works is dead..." This does not say that one is lost without good works, only that his testimony falls dead and lifeless.

This is like a car with a charged-up battery. The headlights will shine. If the battery goes dead, the light will not shine; but, the battery is still there. We can be saved and our life may not be charged up by God's Word and shining the way it should; but, the Holy Spirit is still within us and we are still saved. This is made clear by Ephesians 4:30, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are SEALED UNTO THE DAY OF REDEMPTION."

E. Eternal Life Is Not of Works.

Remember, we are not maintaining that good works are necessary to go to Heaven. Salvation is a free gift and not of works,

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" - Ephesians 2:8-9 But let us be careful to maintain good works which will prove our faith to the lost and be a source of reward to us AFTER we get to heaven.

F. After Salvation, Good Works Receive a Reward.

"If any man's (Christian's) work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward." - 1 Corinthians 3:14

Notice, this is not referring to Heaven or eternal life; but, rewards you receive after you get to Heaven. Heaven is a free gift by faith; while rewards have to be earned by our works.

G. Bad Works Receive Loss of Rewards But, Not Loss Of Salvation

"If any man's (Christian's) work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss (of rewards, not salvation); but he himself SHALL BE SAVED, yet so as by fire."- 1 Corinthians 3:15

H. Our Responsibility

In Matthew 5:13 we are told that we "are the salt of the earth..." In Romans 10:17 we read "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Therefore...

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" - Matthew 5:16

How will they glorify your Father which is in Heaven? By trusting Jesus Christ as their own personal Savior, because your life backed up your testimony which was received as the living truth, instead of falling lifeless upon dead ears. Will you trust Jesus as your Savior right now?

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me (Christ) hath everlasting life." - John 6:47 A few years ago I attended a Bible conference at a large Bible college in the South. One of the speakers spoke on the "so-called contradiction" in James 2:17. At the conclusion of his message he made this startling statement, "If you are really saved, you will live it! His other remarks, along

with this, led all to believe that if you had sinned since being saved or were not really dedicated to Christ, you had better check to see if you were really saved at all! At the invitation thirty-five to forty college students came forward. It was later announced that they had come for REASSURANCE of their salvation.

It was a subtle way to get one to doubt God's faithfulness to His promise of everlasting life because of one's unfaithfulness to Him. This left no room for being in a backslidden condition and that chastening could result if one did not get back in fellowship with the Lord. In 1 John 1:9; 1 John 1:7 we are told...

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness(9)... But if we walk in the light (God's Word), as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (7) This was never brought out at all in his message. The sad thing was that dedication and coming forward was intermingled with salvation. The next time any of these students should sin or not be 100% dedicated, they very likely will again doubt their salvation.

Since that message was not delivered in its proper context, one will never know the devastating effects it will have on some of these students in the future. The whole message was summed up in doubting one's salvation, instead of realizing the Christian's testimony will fall dead on the ears of the lost if our life does not incorporate good works. In discussing 2 Corinthians 5:17 which states...

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

We should notice how this verse is applied when used in inviting people to trust Christ at the invitation. It is usually emphasized that if one is willing to lay all on the altar, i.e., willing to confess and forsake all known sin, then Christ will accept the person and give them eternal life. This may seem like sound theology because God does want us to forsake our sin; but, not as a condition to be saved. Then why would God want us to confess and forsake our sin, if it is not to have eternal life? The answer is made perfectly clear from 1 John 1:6,

"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..."

When a Christian is living in sin his fellowship with God is broken. The way to restore that fellowship between Christ and the believer is set forth in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Now notice carefully, when we forsake, confess, and walk with Christ we have fellowship; not salvation and son-ship. Some have tried to argue this by saying 1 John was written to lost people and not to Christians. The Word of God refutes this argument abruptly. Let us quote 1 John 5:13,

"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life..." Who did John say he wrote these things unto? Christians, of course, "to you that believe."

I hope you begin to see how confusing the terminology of "laying all on the altar" becomes to a lost person. He is led to believe that confession and forsaking all sin is a requirement before God will

accept him. The Bible says that while I was a sinner Christ died for me (Romans 5:8). He did not say, "When you forsake all your sin, Christ will die for you."

We must remember that before a person is saved he is the natural man (1 Corinthians 2:14) and is not indwelt with the Holy Spirit, which is the power that changes a person's life. The Holy Spirit is given to each person simultaneously with his faith in Christ and is not a result of confession, promises, or works. Paul had this same problem with the Galatians,

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched (i.e. tricked or fooled) you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" - Galatians 3:1 Then Paul asked them the question, "Received YE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH" (Galatians 3:1-2; Ephesians 1:13).

Let us present God's salvation, not man's. God's salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Can we not then trust the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to convict and provide the power to change a life, to that which will be pleasing unto God?

I. Confused by Religion About the Result of Salvation.

Now, we examine a text found in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." This is simply our POSITION before God, the way a sinner looks in God's eyes at the point of salvation. God views one as a new creation, born again by faith in Christ. He is a new creation by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "Old things are passed away..." He will never be judged, or chastened, for any sins committed in the past. "...All things become new." What a salvation! The past is forgotten and forgiven, one can now begin a new life with full assurance of eternal life. In Ephesians 2:6 we are told that God "...hath raised (past tense) us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Notice the past tense of this verse. God's salvation is so complete, sure, and reliable that He is letting us know that He looks upon us (the saved) as though we were already in Heaven. The misuse of 2 Corinthians 5:17 has led many into thinking that when they trust Christ as Savior, immediately they will lose their desire to sin. Nothing could be further from the truth. Just because we are saved does not mean we lose our old nature or its influence. God wants the believer to recognize this, so he will not be deceived into doubting his salvation when he does sin. There is not a Christian who has not sinned, "If we say that we (believers) have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

J. Understanding the Two Natures.

One night, one of our deacons and myself were visiting a young couple. I asked the wife if she knew where she was going when she died. She replied, "Yes, right to Hell!" We had explained salvation previous to this and when I asked her why she was going to Hell she explained. She said she still had a desire to do things she did not think a Christian should do. She thought if she accepted Christ she would no longer have a desire to do anything wrong.

She simply did not understand the working of the two natures. In Galatians 5:17 we are told,

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other."

When she realized God did not eradicate the old nature, she understood why the old desires still tried to assert themselves. I am happy to say they accepted Christ and did attend church regularly. Their lives changed as they grew in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

Many times people are confused and doubt their salvation when led to believe everything in their life will change immediately when they are saved. We must remember growth comes with knowledge of God's word (Read 2 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:5-6).

"But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. . ." - 2 Peter 3:18

K. Must We Lay "All On The Altar?"

Whenever an invitation includes "laying all on the altar" for salvation, it can very well lead that person to believe their promises had something to do with their salvation. No matter how many promises, pledges, forsaken habits, nor how sincerely all this is done. . . eternal life is given only as a free gift, not a debt that God owes us (Romans 4:4). Should we not give the invitation to the lost the same as God does,

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved... - " Acts 16:31

Once a person is saved, can we not trust the Word of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit to change a person's life? God does the saving and the Holy Spirit does the changing. Salvation is not "faith and works" or "faith and promises" but FAITH PLUS NOTHING.

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us..." - Titus 3:5

Faith Alone, God's Plan of Salvation

3. Faith Alone, God's Plan of Salvation God provided salvation for all by sending Christ as payment for the sins of the world,

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that who so ever believeth on Him should not perish, but have a everlasting life." His sacrifice was complete and accepted by God; therefore, it was never required again. In Hebrews 10:12 we are told, "But this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God."

God's acceptance of Christ's payment was evidenced when He raised Him from the dead. In Romans 4:25, He ". . . was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification."

Salvation was provided by God and completed by Christ. Christ is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He designed it. Christ's coming to earth to take on human flesh, His death on the Cross, and His Resurrection without the help of man completed it. Therefore, it will be offered to man only on God's condition.

A. Salvation Is for All.

Christ's sacrifice has paid for all sin, past, present—and future. Therefore, since the wages of sin is death, if one sin was left unpaid for, Christ would still be in the grave. Since we have all sinned and the penalty for sin has been paid, then all are welcomed to God's salvation.

"For God so loved the world (everyone) that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him (Christ) should not perish, but have everlasting life." The world is everyone, the invitation is to whosoever; therefore,

"This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." - 1 John 5:11-12

B. Salvation given only as a free gift by faith.

Notice Ephesians 2:8-9,

"For by grace are ye saved, through faith, not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast."

Let's analyze each part of this verse:

"Grace" - Grace is giving us what we do not deserve. Since all have sinned, none deserve eternal life, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

That's grace, Christ dying for us while we cared nothing for Him!

"Are ye saved." - Since Christ paid for our sins, we are saved from eternal damnation by not paying the debt of our own sins.

"Through faith." - Faith and believing both mean the same, i.e. trusting and relying upon God's payment for our sin, the death and resurrection of Christ.

(1) God does not give you the faith to believe with; but rather, gives us Jesus Christ. God loved the world, thus fulfilling His responsibility. Believing, or not believing, is our responsibility.

"Not of yourselves." - Faith excludes any human good on the part of the believer for salvation. Salvation is never given on behalf of promises, resolutions, commitments, or discarded bad habits. "Not of yourselves" means "not of yourselves!" (Titus 3:5, Isaiah 53:6).

"A gift of God." - Salvation is a gift— period! There is no payment for a gift or it then ceases to be a gift. Salvation is a gift of God received by faith only.

"Not of works." - This is the same as "not of yourselves." Twice God emphasizes that no human good can obtain the salvation of God. Isaiah 64:6,

"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

C. Works Before Salvation Won't Get You to Heaven.

In John 6:28-29 a group of lost people asked Christ what good works they could do for God. Here is the record,

"Then said they unto Him (Christ), What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (28)

Since they were lost, no amount of good works would justify them. Our Lord answered them in one clear and concise statement.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that YE BELIEVE ON HIM (Christ) whom he hath sent" (29) Our works account for rewards only after salvation, not before. They are considered as filthy rags prior to salvation (Isaiah 64:6).

D. Self-righteousness- -We Must Be Lost Before We Can Be Saved.

In Luke 16:1-31, just after Christ had given the Parable Of The Unjust Steward, He was derided by the Pharisees. In Luke 16:24 we are told, "And the Pharisees also who were covetous heard all these things and they derided him (Christ)." The reason they did this is given in Luke 16:15,

"And He (Christ) said unto them, ye are they which JUSTIFY YOURSELVES before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

E. The Pharisee and the Publican.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a Publican." - Luke 18:10 What caused Christ to give this parable? The answer is found in Luke 18:9, "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others."

One can easily see why Christ condemned this Pharisee after listening to his self-righteous prayer. Listen to Him in Luke 18:11-12,

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, and adulterers, or even as this publican. (11) I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess." (12) This man is characteristic of many self-righteous church members today. Church members, but lost. Self-justified, but condemned. The publican pictures the sinner, who knows and admits he is a sinner. Until one realizes he is a sinner, he has no need of a Savior. The publican came, not justifying himself, or even worthy to look to Heaven,

"And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes into Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER."

Now let us see who God accepted in Luke 18:14,

"I tell you this man went down to his house JUSTIFIED rather than the other."

F. The Jews.

In Romans 10:1-4, Paul prayer was that his kinfolk, Israel, would be saved. He acknowledged they were religious; but, self-righteous and lost. Here are Romans 10:1-4 in their entirety.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (1) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (2) For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (3) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." (4)

Yes, religious and self-righteous, but lost. They, as many today, will not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God; but are trying to establish their own righteousness. One does not need Christ's righteousness when they are convinced their own is sufficient. The Word of God cannot penetrate a person who is full of self!

G. Faith Gives Us Christ's Righteousness.

"For He hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (Christ)." - 2 Corinthians 5:21 When I trust Christ by faith as my Savior, God gives me the righteousness of Christ, and takes my sin and judges it completely paid for at the Cross. . . where He was made sin for me. Now I can...

"...be found in him (Christ) NOT HAVING MY OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Php_3:9).

Paul, in Galatians 2:21 said,

"I do not frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

In God's Word, faith, believe, and trust all have the same meaning when appearing in connection with salvation. All three mean you are relying 100% on Christ as your payment for sin. Then, and only then, can one have the absolute assurance you will never perish but have everlasting life. I can then say with Paul in Galatians 2:20,

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

What a relief it is to know for sure where I am going when I die! Our assurance is found in 1 John 5:11-13...

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son (Christ). (11)

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. (12)

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life..." (13) There are only two ways to approach God...

Rejected--coming to God with your OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Accepted--coming to God as a sinner,

Accepting Christ by FAITH.

God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

Examination Of Verses Used To Justify The Public Invitation

II. EXAMINATION OF VERSES USED TO JUSTIFY THE PUBLIC INVITATION Matthew 10:32-33

Romans 10:9-10

Romans 10:13-14

First, there is no Scripture anywhere that says you must come to the front of a church to be saved. This is a tradition that has crept into many fundamental churches, which now consider it to be Scriptural.

Explanation of Mat_10:32-33 :

1. Explanation of Matthew 10:32-33 :

However, there are two portions of Scripture that are primarily used in asking people to come forward in a church to receive Christ as Savior. They are, Matthew 10:32-33 and Romans 10:9-10. Let us examine these Verses in detail and see what they are talking about. Let us be as honest with these two portions of Scripture as we are with the rest of God's Word.

Any ardent student of the Bible recognizes that the proper interpretation of a Scripture comes from "rightly dividing the word of truth." This means that we do not take one Scripture by itself and make it mean what we want it to. We should read the whole chapter and then consider the context in which it was written. We should also consider to whom it is written and the dispensational aspects involved.

God told Noah to build an ark, does that mean we are to build an ark today? God instructed Israel to apply the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts so the Death Angel would not smite their firstborn. Are we to do the same today? God told Moses to lift up his rod and stretch his hand over the sea and it was divided. Are we to do the same today? Certainly, the answer is "No!."

Let us examine Matthew 10:32-33, and apply the same rules of interpretation here as we do in the rest of Scripture.

A. Examination of the Context

We shall be examining our text in the overall view of the entire Tenth Chapter of Matthew.

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." - Matthew 10:32-33

We find in Matthew 10:1-7 of this chapter that Christ is sending the Apostles out to preach, who were already saved. There was one impostor; but, that wasn't the Lord's fault! In Matthew 10:16, they would encounter men described as "wolves." Matthew 10:17 tells that they would be scourged! They would be brought before governors and kings because of their preaching (Matthew 10:18). In Matthew 10:22, Christ promised them that they would be saved from being killed, as long as they remained faithful until their ministry was finished. Then in Matthew 10:32-33, quoted above, Christ will confess their faithfulness to the Father for rewards, or their unfaithfulness for loss of rewards in Heaven. These verses have nothing to do with salvation or the coming to the front of a church.

This is service, not salvation! This says nothing about coming to the front of the church for salvation; but, is speaking of our service after we are saved.

B. To Whom Is This Speaking?

By going to the beginning of the Chapter, this question is answered,

"Now when He had called unto Him His twelve disciples...Now the names of the twelve Apostles are...These twelve Jesus sent forth..." - Matthew 10:1-5 In the remaining contexts of these verses, Christ names the Twelve specifically by name. There can be no question as to whom Christ is speaking.

C. Where Were They To Go?

This is answered clearly in Matthew 10:5-6,

"These twelve Jesus sent forth and commanded them saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles and into the city of the Samaritans enter ye not: (5) But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (6)

They were sent only to Israel and the reason is forthcoming.

D. What Were They To Say?

The answer is plainly given in Matthew 10:7, "And as ye preach, saying, the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

Remember, Matthew emphasizes the Kingship of our Savior. This is why the Kingdom of Heaven is mentioned 38 times and only in the Book of Matthew. In other words, they were to preach only to the house of Israel that Christ, their Messiah, was here. The Kingdom of the Heavens (the earthly reign of Christ for 1,000 years) was at hand. If Israel, nationally, would have accepted Christ as their Messiah it would have been instituted.

E. How They Proved Their Message Was of God.

Proof that their message was that of God and not of men was evidenced by the miracles they performed. Matthew 10:8 explains, "Heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give." When they preached that Christ was the Messiah and then raised the dead, it was surely proof that their message was true.

F. The Warning of Christ.

In Matthew 10:16-22, the twelve Apostles are told that their preaching will cause them to be hated by men. They would be brought before councils, governors, kings, and even scourged in the synagogues for His name's sake. He forewarned the Apostles of the results their task would bring. Keep in mind He is still speaking to the Apostles here.

G. How Were They To React?

Matthew 10:16 explains, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." In other words, preach by the wisdom of God, strong in the faith, boldly, but harm no one who resists your message.

H. God's Protection Is Seen.

God's protection is promised in Matthew 10:22, "But he that endureth (remains faithful) to the end (of his ministry) shall be saved (delivered alive)."

Notice in Matthew 10:23, "but when they persecute you in the city, flee ye into another..." When they were rejected from a city, God would deliver, or protect, their life until they could flee to another city. Remember, none of the eleven were killed until after their ministry was finished. When Israel's rejection of their Messiah was final, God permitted the Apostles to obtain their martyr's crown. All were martyred, with the exception of John. They were as sealed by God's protection as the 144,000 in Revelation 7:3; Revelation 9:4; Revelation 14:1.

"But the very hairs of your head are numbered" (30)

How true it is, "If God be for us...who then can be against us?"

I. Their Representative Was Christ.

Christ gave the Apostles their commission, their protection, and He would also reward them by confessing their faithfulness before the Father. Read again Matthew 10:32-33.

If they became weak in their faith and would not confess Him, then He would confess their unfaithfulness to the Father. Remember, this confession by Christ to the Father is for the Apostle's rewards or loss of rewards and not for their salvation. Their faithfulness, no doubt, will be rewarded when they rule and reign with Christ in His earthly Kingdom. This is similar to the way God deals with Christians today concerning their rewards and loss of rewards as spoken of in 1 Corinthians 3:14-15,

"If any man's (Christian's only) work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. (14) If any man's (Christian's) work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (15)

Both Matthew and Corinthians are speaking of fellowship, service, and rewards; not son-ship and salvation. If we keep Matthew 10:32-33 in context, several things may be noticed:

1. The "whosoever" in Matthew 10:32-33 is referring to the twelve Apostles that Christ was addressing in Matthew 10:1-5. It is true that we, today, will be rewarded for our testimony of Christ as other Scriptures point out; but, these Scriptures are referring to the Twelve only.
2. These verses are not speaking about salvation, for confessing Christ is a work of the flesh and we are not saved by works, NOT EVEN ONE! (Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5)
3. These verses were given to those, the Apostles, who had already identified themselves as being believers, and not as a condition for salvation.
4. The whole chapter is dealing with one group of men, the twelve Apostles; one nation, Israel; and one message, "the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." If we are going to apply just two verses, we would have to pull them completely out of context which would be mutilating God's Word.

One would have as much right to claim Matthew 10:8 as the permission to raise the dead today. Others would have the right to claim the promises of physical protection in Matthew 10:22. Here He promised the Apostles, if they would remain faithful to the end of their commission, nothing could happen to their lives. How erroneous it would be to apply this to the Church Age. Many a missionary has been faithful to the Gospel, yet their life was not spared, but taken. Read "Through Gates of Splendor" by Elisabeth Elliot, for example; and you will learn how five missionaries in the

prime of life were murdered by the Auca Indians in the Ecuadorian jungle.

5. Since these verses are speaking only about service and not salvation, we should not confuse the listener by mixing grace and works. Many times it is said that salvation is by grace and not of works; and people are then, immediately, invited to "Step out and come to the front of the church" to receive Christ. If this is not a work—then I do not know what is!

We are preaching one thing and doing the opposite when we require a person to do a work before receiving Christ. People are led to believe they cannot be saved unless they come forward to do it. If I can be saved in my seat, then why ask me to come to the front of a church to receive Christ? This is a question many ask. Many have left a church service still lost because a pastor said one thing about salvation and then required the person to do something else (Romans 11:6).

6. Nowhere do these verses mention anything about walking to the front of a church. Where does it say anything about getting out of your seat? Where does it say anything about confessing Christ before a congregation? The "confessing" in Matthew 10:32-33 is referring to the twelve Apostles preaching the "Kingdom of heaven is at hand" and not just standing in front of a congregation saying "I believe in Christ."

7. Keeping these verses in context, one would only be required to confess in the presence of Jews. Does not Matthew 10:6 say, "Go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

8. These verses would only have confession made to the lost, not the saved. When we apply this today and have a person confess Christ in front of a congregation; then, it is mostly before the saved and not the lost. Remember, this "confession" is referring to preaching the Kingdom message.

J. Conclusions Drawn From The Facts:

I have talked to many people who refused to go back to church again because they have felt compelled to walk to the front of a church to be saved. Truthfully, how many times have you seen the same people, time after time, in the front of the church in response to this type of invitation. A lady asked me not long ago why I do not have people come forward to be saved. Here are a few of the many reasons I gave her:

1. No scripture even hints that you must come to the front of a church to be saved or even after you are saved.

2. We always teach people the importance of confessing Christ after they are saved by faith alone. Let us confess Him where it will be of most benefit. Let us tell our mothers, fathers, brothers, sister, our children, our relatives and our neighbors who are not saved. Let us confess Christ, in reality, where it counts!

3. Coming forward causes confusion, for many people are led to believe this has something to do with salvation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

4. Let us not be guilty of isolating a verse of Scripture, taking it completely out of context, to support a tradition inherited from the past. In summary, salvation is only one way and that is by trusting Jesus Christ as our Savior (John 6:47). It is the same for all individuals no matter where

you are or who you are. When I am on radio or television, I invite people to trust Christ right where they are: in their home, their car, walking down the street—wherever. Why, then is the invitation changed when we are in church?

Perhaps you are one who is really bitter toward churches because someone has tried to force you down an aisle. Please do not be bitter at the Lord. He never made this a condition for salvation. God does not ask us to do anything to be saved. He only asks that we accept what He has done. God loved you so much that He paid for your sins completely before you were ever born. He only asks you to completely trust in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and then rest in God's promise that you will never perish but have everlasting life.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" - 1 John 5:11-12

Explanation of Rom_10:9-10.

2. Explanation of Romans 10:9-10.

Let us examine another portion of Scripture used to support the practice of "coming forward" in a church to receive Christ as Savior.

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (9) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."- Romans 10:9-10

These two verses, along with Matthew 10:32-33, are the most widely used in support of asking people to walk to the front of a church to receive Christ as Savior.

Let us examine the context surrounding Romans 10:9-10. One scholar has correctly pointed out that these three Chapters are speaking primarily concerning the Jewish nation and the Jewish people. Romans 9:1-33 is speaking of Israel in the past, Romans 10:1-21 is concerning Israel in the present (during the Church Age) and Romans 11:1-36 deals with their future.

Romans 9:1-33 recalls to Israel the REASON they were rejected as a nation,

"Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone" (32) Romans 10:1-21 is the remedy for their rejection, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Romans 10:4). The future result is that, at the end of the 7-Year Tribulation Period, Christ will return to establish the Kingdom and...

"so all Israel (nationally) shall be saved: as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away the ungodliness from Jacob." (Romans 11:26).

2 Timothy 3:16 informs us that

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

If God is the inspiration of all Scripture, it is certain He is not going to contradict Himself. In Romans 10:9, the Bible states that if one has believed and confessed Christ, he is saved. If this confession were a work we had to do for salvation, this would definitely contradict every other Scripture that states you have eternal life by faith alone.

Remember, confession is definitely a work you do with the flesh. Let us look at some verses in Romans that would be false if the "confession" in Romans 10:9 was essential for salvation.

Romans 3:22... "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference."

Romans 3:26..."To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Romans 3:30..."Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision (Jews) by faith, and uncircumcision (Gentiles) through faith."

Romans 4:5..."But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Romans 5:1... "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 9:32 ... "Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone." The reason that Christians cannot boast in themselves about their salvation; they did not do any good works to receive it.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." - Romans 3:27 The capstone of all texts that prove that salvation is either by grace or works is,

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" - Romans 11:6

A. Consider The Conditions:

Consider Romans 10:9 in its setting. The Jews, nationally, had rejected Christ as the Messiah. For an individual to accept Christ and confess that He was the Messiah would mean loss of friends, respect, position, and would bring persecution and possibly, even death. The account of Stephen and his testimony shows that his professing Christ as Savior resulted in his death. First, they accused him of blasphemy by bribing men to say so,

"Then they suborned (bribed) men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law" - Acts 6:11; Acts 6:13 Secondly, they arrested him and brought him before the council (Sanhedrin, the Jewish court of law),

"And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council" - Acts 6:12 Finally, they killed him, for they could not stand his testimony concerning Christ,

"Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, (57) And cast him out of the city, and stoned him... (58) and Saul was consenting unto his death" - Acts 7:57-58; Acts 8:1 Saul (Paul) persecuted many who confessed Christ, whether male or female,

"And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem" - Acts 9:1 After Paul's salvation, he testified of the great persecutions he received of the Jews for confessing Christ,

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; (8) Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; (9) Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. (10) For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." -2 Corinthians 4:8-11.

"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, (4) In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." - 2 Corinthians 6:4-5.

"Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep" (25) "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one"(24) - 2 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 11:24. At this time, for a Jewish person to accept Christ and then publicly confess Him, knowing the persecution sure to come, you can rest assured that he was saved; as Romans 10:9 attests,

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, (not just that He was a good man) and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Many translate "confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord." In the 3rd Century B.C., a Greek translation was made from the Hebrew. It is known as the Septuagint. In the Old Testament the Hebrew "Jehovah" is God. So, whenever they came to "Jehovah," they used the Greek word, "Kurios," meaning "God," which is translated as "Lord" in Romans 10:9. In other words, the first phrase of Romans 10:9 could read: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth that Jesus is GOD." This verse separated the professors from the possessors. There were some who were naming Christ as Lord, but did not really believe He was the Messiah; or, God in human flesh.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (21) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (22) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" - Matthew 7:21-23.

These were not persecuted for their confession, because their confession of the Lord did not include that He was the Messiah. In the time Romans 10:9 was written, those who confessed the Lord Jesus were confessing him as "Jehovah" God, as evidenced by their believing God had raised Him from the dead. Anyone who confessed this would probably face death. The "thou shalt be saved" is not intended in the Greek to reveal a condition for salvation by confessing and believing; but a definite fact that no one facing death would confess Christ as their Messiah, unless they were saved. This is substantiated further by Romans 10:10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The word "made" is the Greek word "HOMOLOGEO" and means "acknowledgement by confession in the attitude of giving thanks." (Strong's Exhaustive Concordance).

Why would a person give thanks for something they have not already received? They were giving thanks for Christ's righteousness that God gave them for believing.

"For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the right-eousness of God in him." - Corinthians 5:21.

"For if by one man's (Adam's) offense death reigned by one; much more they (the believers) which receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ"-Romans 5:17.

Php_3:9 could speak no clearer,

"And be found in him (Christ) not having mine own righteousness which of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

B. Romans 10:10 Contains a Two-Fold Doctrinal Truth.

Every Bible student knows there are two justifications in God's word. One is positional justification and the other is practical justification. Our positional justification; or, eternal life by faith alone, is found in Romans 5:1.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is justification in God's eyes. The Christian's practical justification is before man. Many people lead very good lives, but that does not mean they are Christians. People cannot look into a person's mind and see if they have faith in Jesus Christ, and are a Christian. Only when a Christian confesses their faith in Jesus Christ does a lost person justify them as being a Christian. Romans 10:17 explains, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." This is comparable to the contrast found in Romans and James. Romans shows that man is justified in God's sight by faith without works. James points out that for men to know we are saved, we must show them by our works, which includes confessing Christ. This is justification in man's eyes.

God does not need our confession to know we are saved as God looks where man cannot see, upon the heart. Simultaneously, upon belief in Christ as Savior, God imparts the salvation He has promised,

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath (right now) everlasting life" - John 6:47

Some Christians have an erroneous idea to excuse their lack of witnessing for Christ. They say, "People will just see Christ in me by the way I live." This is not true and the last of Romans 10:10 verifies this. By not confessing Christ and just living a good life, you receive the glory, not the Lord.

Romans 10:10 states, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." The first part of the verse...

"...with the heart man believeth unto righteousness..."

...is our justification before God. The righteousness spo-ken of here is Christ's righteousness placed to our account, with our sins (past, present, and future) placed to His account, paid for by His death and resurrection.

2 Corinthians 5:21 explains,

"For he hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of God in him (Christ)."

Therefore I am,

"...found in him (Christ), not having mine own right-eousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."- Php_3:9. This is our salvation, our everlasting life, our position in Heaven, and our justification in God's eyes.

Now, the last part of Romans 10:10.

"...With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Notice the word "MADE". It is the Greek word "homologeō," and is defined by Strong's Concordance as "Acknowledgment by confession in the attitude of giving thanks." In Romans 10:1-21 we are saved and justified in God's eyes. Now, in Romans 10:10 b, we are giving thanks and confessing our faith to someone else. Our mouth confession is made unto salvation in the eyes of the one I am witnessing to. You can't confess to something you don't already have! The summary of Romans 10:10, literally explained, is this:

I believe that Jesus Christ died for me;

I am so grateful that I am going to Heaven on His (Christ's) righteousness; And that my sins were completely paid for on Calvary. That is why I confess to others; because I want them to know they can have a home in Heaven the same way I can. This is our practical justification in man's eyes, to which the last part of Romans 10:1-21 has reference. Romans 10:10 has nothing to do with the coming to the front of the church. Believing is our position before God, our salvation. Confessing is our position before man, our service.

"So then faith (others to believe) cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." - Romans 10:17 The only way others can know I am a Christian is by my confessing Christ as my personal Savior. Then, if I want people to believe my testimony, I must live so that my life will substantiate what I say. When one makes a study of the Book of Acts from Paul's conversion on, you will find Paul witnessing to the lost, not the saved! Romans 10:9 has nothing to do with coming to the front of the church to be saved. We are to confess openly to the lost that we believe that Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected for our sins. We, then, will be justified as being saved by those we have witnessed to; hoping they will receive Christ, also by faith, and be saved. This is the Christian's practical justification, of which Romans 10:9 is speaking.

Salvation is God's provision for my position, or just-ification, before Him, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." When I confess Christ, bystanders do not see a self-righteous person, but see Christ as the reason for my leading a separated life. Then Christ receives the glory.

"And with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." In whose eyes? Man's eyes, of course! My life alone will not lead others to Christ for I must confess Him as the reason, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" - Romans 10:14

Rom_10:13-14

3. Romans 10:13-14

Romans 10:13 is also sometimes used as a condition for salvation, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The word "saved" here would be better translated "delivered" as the context will show. Romans 10:13 states, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD, shall be saved." This is a direct quote from Joel 2:32 where "saved" is translated "delivered" from the Hebrew. This is not speaking of salvation; but, being delivered, or saved, from the persecution they were going to receive after they were identified as being a Christian.

Before Paul was saved, he consented to Stephen's death. (See Acts 7:1-60).

"And Saul was consenting unto his (Stephen's) death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church..." - Acts 8:1.

After Paul was saved, he suffered great persecution for being a Christian. He testified to the Thessalonians,

"For ye brethren...also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: (14) Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; (15) ...Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved..."-1 Thessalonians 2:14-16. To the Corinthians he wrote,

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; (8) Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." - Corinthians 4:8,9.

Calling upon the Lord has nothing to do with salvation; but, is a privilege given to those who are already saved. This is clarified by Romans 10:14, "How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed." The question has arisen, "If we are already saved before we call upon Him, then what do we call upon Him for?"

Romans 10:12 will shed some light,

"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him (Christ)." The phrase that the "Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" cannot be speaking of salvation as those that called were already saved by faith. So, the being "rich to those that call" must pertain to additional blessings and provisions after salvation.

Here are several important things to consider:

A. No Difference Between Jew & Greek

"There is no difference between the Jew and Greek" (Gentile). (Romans 10:12) There is no preference or special privileges because of nationality. The Lord is dealing with individuals

regardless of race. Remember, the Jewish people had the advantage over the Gentiles because unto them were committed the oracles of God (Romans 3:1-2). When, nationally, they rejected their Messiah, God temporarily stopped working through them as a nation. He is reminding them that, individually, Gentile and Jew will be treated alike; even though Israel, as a nation, has been temporarily set aside.

B. Great Persecutions

Christians, at this time, faced great persecutions for the name of Christ.

Those that called upon Him were the saved.

The Lord promised to be rich upon all that called.

He also promised to deliver those who called. With this in mind, the passage should become clear. Those that believed in Christ, knowing they were going to face persecutions, could now call upon the Lord to deliver them. He would be rich unto them by giving them strength and boldness to confess Him. He would be rich in comforting them during their trials or whatever need they might have had. We, who are saved today, must also call upon the Lord to supply our needs, give us boldness to witness and comfort to go through our trials or whatever need we may have. But I can say, as Paul did, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me,"

...only because the Lord is rich upon all (saved) that call upon Him.

Now, let us look at Romans 10:13-14 together.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved (i.e., 'delivered'). (13) How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed..." (14)

Therefore, those who are believers in Christ now have the privilege to call upon the Lord, to deliver them through whatever persecution they may endure. These verses have nothing to do with coming to the front of the church and confessing Christ.

Since the portions of Scripture we have been considering, Romans 10:9-10 and Romans 10:13-14 are often quoted to motivate people to come to the front of a church to confess Christ, we might consider this summary:

Confession is not a condition for salvation. Many people are confused by mixing salvation with the work of confessing.

Nothing is said in Scripture about coming to the front of a church.

People are made to feel as though they are not saved if they do not come forward, and this is not what the Scriptures teach.

Nothing is said in Scripture about confession being simultaneous with salvation. The author was saved a year or so before he confessed Christ publicly.

Many say you can be saved in your seat, but then will not invite people to actually trust Christ where they sit.

Many want to be saved but do not want to stand before a crowd of people. If God does not make this a condition for salvation, what right do we have to make it a condition? Should we not give the lost every opportunity that God does?

We need to remember that confession is not always simultaneous with salvation. It takes time to grow, and confession comes with growth. Many have left a church service lost, with their blood on the preacher's hands because he wanted to make the people do something that God did not require for salvation.

God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

The Invitation

III. THE INVITATION 1. The Procedure. The invitation at the conclusion of a service may vary somewhat, but most generally it follows this procedure. The pastor or evangelist will ask the congregation to bow their heads at the conclusion of the sermon. The congregation is addressed with the question, "Is anyone today interested in their soul? If so, would you let me see your hand so that I can pray for you." A prayer is then given. It may go something like this, "Lord, we pray for those who raised their hands. Help them to make that decision by slipping out of their seats and receiving Christ here at the front of the church (or altar). Amen." The congregation is then asked to stand and sing and an invitation song. Another plea is usually given, "Now that you have raised your hands, step out on the first verse. When you take that first step the Lord will be with you the rest of the way. The pastor and personal workers will be waiting to meet you." Sometimes you will hear, "It wasn't easy for Christ and it won't be easy for you." The length may run from 3 to 25 minutes, depending the pastor/evangelist; or, how many come. In assuming someone may come for salvation, they are then introduced to a personal worker who shows them the "Romans Road to Salvation" as many Baptists put it. (The Romans Road is Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Romans 10:9-10).

After receiving Christ as Savior, they are then asked to stand before the congregation for their public profession. The pastor then asks the individual if they believe that Jesus Christ died to pay for their sins. The answer, of course, is "I do." Pastor: "And so you want to follow in believer's baptism?" "I do." (Usually, going down the aisle and responding with the words "I do." gets you married; but, with the public invitation, it's supposed to mean you're saved.) The person remains standing and after the closing prayer the congregation files by and gives them a handshake and a word of encouragement.

If someone comes, inevitably, the pastor will have the congregation sing another verse, and another verse, and another; as long as people are coming.

I would like to analyze this type of invitation:

Question: "Does Anyone Care About Their Soul?"

When the congregation is asked, "Is anyone interested in their soul, please raise your hand so I may pray for you," my question is... "Why would one ask the congregation a question like that when their presence there is already the answer? In other words, why would they be there if they were not interested? The question accomplishes absolutely nothing, so why ask it? As an example, allow me to relate an incident that happened some years back. A revival was being held in a large fundamental Baptist church. My wife and I had invited several people to come, and most did. At the conclusion of the service the evangelist asked the congregation with their heads bowed, "If any here was interested in their soul."

There were probably 350 to 400 in attendance and no one raised their hand. The same and only question was repeated 4 or 5 times—still with no hands raised. Abruptly the evangelist stated,

"The meeting is dismissed." When I raised my head and looked at the evangelist, it was apparent he was mad and disgusted. There was no invitation given at all. The pastor seemed shocked at the abrupt ending. He thanked the people for coming and invited them back the next night. The next night we returned with about the same amount of people as the first night. The exact same thing happened the second night. Because no one raised their hand to indicate they were concerned for their soul, he would not proceed to give the invitation.

Let us continue our analysis: The lack of hands being raised seemed to indicate to him that his sermon was ineffective.

It was apparent that he was angry. To ask a congregation to indicate by the raised hand if they are interested in their salvation is applying a traditional procedure which is supported nowhere in the Bible. This is a procedure he had incorporated.

I would think that the presence of the person in church would indicate they were interested in their soul or they would not have come.

Evidently, since no hands were raised, this was taken as an insult to the evangelist concerning his message, otherwise, why would it anger him to the point of open disgust to the audience? In following an unscriptural procedure, the results motivated the preacher to actually go against God's Word. What right did the evangelist have to refuse to invite people to trust Christ as Savior—just because they did not react the way he wanted them to? Did he not also betray the trust of others who had invited the lost in full confidence, that he surely would invite them to trust Christ as their Savior.

Whenever we begin to put ourselves into the picture and start acting on the authority of our feelings instead of the authority of God's Word; we will rob people of the right to trust Christ; but may still think we are doing God's will (John 3:30).

Since "God so loved the world" (John 3:16), should we not then tell the world at every opportunity of his love. We should "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season..." (2 Timothy 4:2). Acting by obedience and not by feeling we can always trust the Word, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, to accomplish that which it is sent forth to do (Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11). His attitude put a dampening effect throughout the congregation. In conclusion, we need to get back to the basics of expounding the Word of God and when we are finished, invite people to trust Christ—period! We need to dispense with all the foolish questions that amount to nothing and actually bind the invitation. Let us just plainly invite people to trust Christ.

We did not return to hear him again, nor did many others. It was sad to see this evangelist get upset over nothing and then refuse to give an invitation because of his hurt feelings. His invitation, not God's, had repercussions not only on the congregation, but also upon himself. Can You Be Saved In Your Seat?

When people are asked to leave their seat and receive Christ at the front of the church my question is, "Why cannot Christ be received where they sit?" The only reason is, they are not told to do this. Many people have been saved by hearing the Gospel over the radio. Did they walk down the aisle? No. Many have been saved by seeing and hearing the Gospel over television. Many are led to Christ at their home, at work, or in a hospital and walking the aisle of a church was

never mentioned.

Then, cannot a person in church be saved in the same way? Of course they can! One does not doubt the salvation of a person saved in these various situations, but when we are in church a person's salvation is questioned if they do not come forward. The paradox is this--if a person was led to Christ in their home and the next door neighbor came to church the next Sunday, the one who came to church would not receive the same invitation to receive Christ as his neighbor did. Since he is in church, he must come to the front of the church to be saved. If he is at home, all he would have to do is receive Christ as his Savior. The Bible invitation has never changed. No matter what location you are in, it is also the same, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved..." In Romans 10:17 we are told "...faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

If a person can be saved hundreds of miles away by hearing the Gospel over the radio, then a person can be saved 30 feet away, from the pulpit to the pew, if given the same opportunity.

Believer's Baptism Needs To Be Thoroughly Explained.

After the individual has publicly confessed Christ, they are almost always asked if they want to follow in "believer's baptism" and the answer is always, "Yes." I, personally, have never heard a "No" answer except maybe from small children who are not sure what their parents would say. My only point of thought concerning this is, it is as automatic as putting your shoes on before leaving the house. I believe a new Christian should have baptism explained and be shown from Scripture exactly what it represents (a testimony) and that it has no saving power. I believe a person should understand about baptism and the time allotment is usually not sufficient at the conclusion of the service to discuss these things.

Remember, the time from coming forward to standing before the congregation is usually a few minutes, hardly enough time to cover salvation, let alone anything else. I believe a home visit is much more beneficial to explain and answer questions than trying to do it on the front pew or counseling room in five or ten minutes.

People have many questions concerning salvation, growth, the Lord's will in their life, inerrancy of Scripture, prophecy, etc. To answer these questions, a home visit, with plenty of time and no interruptions or distractions, produces the best results.

Length of Service Can Be A Hindrance to the Gospel.

Should the church service begin and end on time? The reason I am discussing this is, in talking to literally hundreds of church attendees, their displeasure in the length of invitation has been expressed. I am a firm believer in starting our services on time. We do not want our organ and piano players, Sunday School teachers or people to be late. It is an example to all of our preparedness. We can hardly ask anyone else to be on time if we do not start our services on time.

It is just as important to conclude our services on time; or as close to the expected time as possible. If people are told the services conclude at noon, then it ought to conclude at noon. When the coming forward invitation is extended one more verse, then one more verse and so on; until time approaches 12:30 or 12:45, does one wonder why people get upset or angry? I personally

believe they have a right to. The excuse given by the pastor is usually that the people who complain are not really spiritual and do not have a sincere desire to see souls saved. Why not arrange the service to conclude on time with the invitation included. When people are invited to trust Christ in their seats, the invitation would take only a few minutes.

If visitors leave the church angry, then the whole purpose of the church is defeated. It is very unlikely the person who is "turned off" because they are kept an unexpected 20 to 30 minutes will return very soon. Many times it is hard to get people to come to church the first time, so why drive them away with an unscriptural practice?

I have had some tell me they heard two sermons--one before the invitation, and one with the invitation. If the power is in the first sermon, there will be no need for a successive sermon of 20 minutes or more to persuade people to come forward. It is important to start and conclude the service on time. After all, the purpose is to motivate people to want to return next Sunday.

God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

Lordship Salvation

IV. LORDSHIP SALVATION

Another variation of this invitation when inviting people forward mixes faith and dedication for salvation. This is known as "Lordship salvation." The phrase most commonly used goes something like this, "Make Christ Lord of your life, for if He is not Lord of all (means completely controlling your life); He is not Lord at all." In essence this means "if one is not entirely surrendered to the Lord's will, then they are not really saved," for then He is not Lord at all. This invitation includes phrases like:

"Come and lay all upon the altar."

"Come and give your life to Jesus."

"Come and surrender all to Jesus and be saved."

"Come, make Him Lord of your life and be saved." And so on!

Many have responded to this type of invitation sincerely desiring to surrender all, make Him Lord, give their life, and lay all upon the altar. Then, after Sunday comes Monday, and soon they realize they have fallen short of fulfilling their promise of complete surrender made last Sunday!

What now! In talking to many who have experienced this, almost unanimously, two things come to their mind. The first is, "Was I really saved?" The second is, "If I was really saved, how could I have failed the Lord so soon?" If not counseled soon, this person very often does not come back to church. The reason is, they are embarrassed over not fulfilling their promises and commitments to the Lord, and they do not want people to think they are hypocrites. The question is, "Do you have to make Christ Lord of your life to be saved?"

Many pastors and evangelists make this a part of their call "to come forward" or the public invitation. This is actually the damnable doctrine of "Lordship Salvation in disguise!" This false teaching is incorrectly derived from Romans 10:9 a, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus. The verse should actually read, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, Jesus as LORD (or Jehovah)." For Christian Jews, or Christian Gentiles, to testify that Jesus was Jehovah during the First Century A.D., was a dangerous thing in light of the persecution against the church, in Judea and elsewhere, which they were encountering. As Paul said to the Thessalonians,

"For ye brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: (14) Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; (15) ...Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved..." - 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16.

"Jesus" is a transliteration of the Greek "Iesous," which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew name we know as "Jehoshua" which means "Jehovah is Salvation" or "Jehovah is the Saviour" or "Jehovah Saves." The name "Lord" is the Greek "Kurios" which, in the Greek translation of the Old

Testament known as the Septuagint, is used for "Jehovah." Therefore, by its use it implies deity. To confess that Jesus is Lord is to testify that Jesus is truly God in human flesh who went to the cross, died, was buried and was resurrected as foretold by the prophets." Kenneth S. Wuest (Word Studies in the Greek New Testament). This refutes the false teaching that you must make Jesus Lord of your life to be saved, or "Lordship Salvation." This is NOT what this verse is teaching at all. One false teaching leads to another. For example, should God give us salvation on our promise that we will make Christ Lord of our lives; then, if at any time later in our lives we should not allow Him to be Lord over our lives, our salvation would be lost! In other words, one would have to be in complete obedience, and live sinlessly for the rest of our lives to not lose our salvation. This is impossible! Whatever happened to the doctrine of eternal security of the believer?

"Making Christ Lord of your life" as a part of salvation is also adding works to salvation. This is certainly not scriptural.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. - Ephesians 2:8-9 As I have said before, salvation does not come as a result of what we do. We have salvation because we believe and accept what Christ has done for us, when He died on the cross as our payment for sin and was resurrected showing that God accepted the payment.

"Make Christ Lord of your life," is another religious cliché. What is most likely meant is a dedication of your life, a time when you determine that you want to live your life as a good testimony for the Lord. As the Apostle Paul says in Romans 6:13,

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

After we are saved, Christ wants us to dedicate ourselves to follow Him. One must remember that dedication is never a condition to obtain salvation; but is God's will for every believer after we are saved. Romans 12:1-2 is written to the Christian,

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (1) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (2) The sad thing is, they were misled to believe they had to make promises and commitments to Christ in order to be saved. This is some of the damage that is done by this type of invitation. The person is led to believe that they must give something to Christ in order to be saved, little realizing salvation is all of the Lord. It is receiving what Christ did for eternal life, not offering what we can do to deserve it.

The Person Who Has No Desire To Be Saved.

1. The Person Who Has No Desire To Be Saved.

One of the persons considered here is one who may not have desire to be saved. This does not mean they cannot be saved; because they can! Many people are saved today who never had a desire for spiritual things. Many are stimulated or stirred when witnessed to by hearing a radio message, or sermon in a church.

Different approaches, messages, topics, such as death, prophecy and etc. may stimulate a person's interest even though they may have had no prior concern. The type of invitation employed at the end of the service has a tremendous effect upon the persons present. This is why it is so important to present the Gospel to the lost as simply and clearly as the Word of God states, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me (Christ) hath everlasting life" - John 6:47

While pastoring in Southern Indiana a few years back, I attended a large outdoor evangelistic meeting in the area of Cincinnati, Ohio. This was sponsored by a large independent church, their speaker was a nationally known and popular evangelist from Louisiana. The message was good, and related throughout that belief in Christ was all that was necessary for eternal life.

At the invitation, it was then stated that if you wanted to be saved you must leave your seat and walk to the front of the platform and there receive Christ as Savior. Just in front of me a young boy, just about eight years old, asked his mother if he could go forward. His mother would not let him. The invitation was held for a lengthy period of time. At the closing I gave the mother a tract and asked her to read it and told her that she did not have to go forward to be saved.

I have often wondered if this little boy ever got saved or was brought under conviction again. Since he wanted to go forward, I am sure he would have received Christ as Savior if given an opportunity to do so, from where he was seated. I have related this incident to some other people for their assessment. The standard escape route was, "How terrible for his mother not to allow or take her son to the platform!" All the blame was placed upon the mother. Whose fault was it really? Should not the evangelist have given the invitation to be saved the same way as he stated in his message? I believe so, and if he had, the boy probably would have been saved.

Another sad occasion occurred in Indianapolis, Indiana, at a conference held at the Lifegate Baptist Church. One of the key speakers delivered a tremendous message in the morning meeting. About half way through the message several "hippie" type young people came in and sat in the back pews. I was at the rear of the church taping the message. The young people appeared to be 18 or 19 years old with long hair and dressed very shabbily. At the conclusion of the service an invitation was given to come forward—with no response. The speaker extended the invitation for quite some time and finally one person re-sponded. It became obvious the speaker was upset and appeared to actually be getting mad, evidently because of the lack of response.

He then began a verbal attack in a roundabout way directed toward the "hippies." I watched them as they recognized immediately what was being done. They began to look at each other, some sneering in disgust, and some laughing so as to mock the speaker. He had obviously singled them out in the final minutes of his invitation. I shall never forget his closing remark. He pointed his finger toward the back of the auditorium and stated, "You need to do the most manly thing you have ever done in your life and step to the front of the church and receive Christ!" There was not a doubt in anyone's mind who he was talking to.

Personally I would have not gone down for help from him after this kind of attack. People are not apt to respond to a personal attack coupled with resentment and anger in a positive manner. I often wonder what would have happened if an invitation had been given in love, without a personal attack on them. When the closing prayer was given they made a "bee-line" for the door and it was evident they were angry. I approached them immediately outside the church. I gave them a tract and told them they did not have to go to the front of the church to be saved. I tried to apologize for the speaker's attack; but, to no avail. They were turned off 100%! I cannot repeat the things they said. I will say, I do not blame them for feeling as they did. It will be nothing short of a miracle if they are ever reached for Christ after what happened that day.

Whatever their reason for coming in was, I do not know; but I do know this, the speaker had an obligation to God to present Christ, clearly and simply— with love, to all who were there. The message was great, but the invitation was a disaster completely overshadowing the message. The next person who attempts to witness to any of their group will undoubtedly never know the surrounding circumstances that may have sealed their rejection of Christ.

Paul, of the New Testament, emphasized the importance of using simplicity concerning God's Word. In 2 Corinthians 1:12 we are told,

"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, THAT IN SIMPLICITY and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by grace of God , we have our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

Since coming forward is never mentioned in the Bible as an ingredient for salvation—why corrupt the simplicity of simply trusting Christ as Savior.

Paul in writing 2 Corinthians 11:3 said this,

"But I fear, least by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted FROM THE SIMPLICITY that is in Christ."

Another ingredient which must prevail if the Gospel is to have an effect upon people is that it must be presented in love. In 1 Thessalonians 3:12 we are told, "And the Lord make you to increase and ABOUND IN LOVE one toward another and TOWARD ALL MEN, even as we do toward you."

Ephesians 4:15 says we are to, "Speak the truth in love." As happens so many times...love is replaced with disgust when no one responds by coming forward.

Allow me to relate one more experience. At a previous pastorate, one of the deacons discussed an experience that happened to his brother in the same church I was pastoring, but prior to my coming. His brother had come to church and responded to the invitation of, "If you would like to be

saved, come forward." When he went forward a personal worker went with him to another room for counseling. He was instructed that upon receiving Christ as his Savior, he would have to stand in front of the church and answer a couple of questions from the pastor. The young man told the personal worker that he did not want to stand in front of the church at this time. He was told that his procedure went along with being saved. To make a long story short, he was not saved, he did not stand before the church for his public profession, and he left the church that morning vowing never to come back again. His brother asked me to pray for and visit him. Truthfully, I was not overly excited about the visit because I knew from past experience that some of the hardest people to reach are those who have had a bad church experience. The young man was then playing the drums in a dance band. As I recall, I believe the opener for the conversation was the fact that I had played drums in a dance band some years back. He seemed quite shocked that a preacher had once been a drummer in a dance band. I do not suppose he was any more shocked than I would have been, if someone would have told me back then I would be a preacher! Anyway, it opened the door to tell him about Christ. I assured him if he came to church he did not have to come down to the front to be saved. A very exceptional ending concludes this experience. He began coming to church, received Christ as his Savior, became an usher, then a member on our trustee board. He later felt God's call to the ministry and graduated after four years of Bible College. It was an honor to ordain him into the Gospel ministry here during one of my previous pastorates a while back. He then started a church in Southern Indiana and is a great witness for the Lord.

I would not for a moment question the well-meant intentions and sincerity of the pastor and personal worker dealing with this man's salvation. But, because of the traditional invitation of coming and standing before the congregation as part of salvation, this young man was turned away from Christ instead of to Christ.

Something I think we need to remember. This man did not reject the Gospel, he rejected the Gospel MIXED with a traditional ingredient of coming forward. That is what he rejected and it was not God's fault—but man's.

I have given only a few of the hundreds of experiences of people who have been turned off and away from Christ. I honestly feel this is the other half of the story; which is neither told, nor discussed today.

The Person Who Has No Desire To Be Saved.

The Problem

2. The Problem.

A. Inconsistency.

When one is invited to receive Christ by faith in their home and they do so, they are saved. They are not asked to walk an aisle. At a funeral people are not asked to come to the front, only to receive Christ. In the hospital one is simply asked to believe that Christ died to pay for their sins and rose again and walking the aisle is never the issue. When listening to a radio sermon I have never heard an invitation to come forward, only believe. It would be absurd to invite people to come forward over the radio. When watching a religious broadcast on television, I have never heard a preacher or evangelist inviting the home audience to come forward to receive Christ. They are usually told to "Trust Christ right where you are." The inconsistency is this, why do not the people at the outdoor meeting or in the church have the same opportunity to receive Christ by faith alone as those listening to the radio, watching television, or in their home, or at a funeral, or in the hospital? Usually, at a televised outdoor revival the speaker will ask people to come to the platform to be saved; and, then, turn to the television audience and say "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ right where you are and be saved."

If all the people who had gone to the meeting would have stayed home and viewed the television program, they would have had a better opportunity to be saved!

B. A Tradition.

Independent, fundamental churches, as ourselves, frown on traditions framed and incorporated outside the word of God. In Peter 1:18 and 19, Peter wrote concerning being saved by anything outside of the blood of Christ, speaking of their traditions received from their fathers.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, RECEIVED BY TRADITION from your fathers. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot."

Paul, In writing to the Colossians, said,

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. - Colossians 2:8

While some have condemned others for their traditions, they, themselves, are guilty of practicing the traditional invitation of coming forward to be saved.

C. Affects The Preacher & The Evangelist.

It is so often that preachers judge their success by the amount of public professions that are made. Numbers of souls saved are recorded at the front of the church, based on the number of people who come forward. Since water baptism is the Biblical commandment for public testimony, why

not post the amount of baptisms which would reflect the number of people who made their profession public?

Many evangelists, who send out their flyers, list the amount of conversions they have had at their previous meetings. This, I take it, is to impress me of their successful meetings so I will be more eager to engage them.

Whether admitted to or not, the gleanings from the public invitation have been used as a means to promote one's self as a successful pastor or evangelist. It has become a measuring line between success and failure. I could not number the amount of pastors I have talked with who became discouraged because "No one came forward." The whole success of their ministry seemed to be based upon this.

I think it might be beneficial, at this point, to recognize that in preaching the Word of God there is a time of planting, a time for watering, and in due time, God will honor His Word and give the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6). Our responsibility is to faithfully present God's Word. In 1 Corinthians 3:7-8 we are told,

"So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth: BUT GOD THAT GIVETH THE INCREASE. (7) Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one; and every man shall receive his own reward." (8)

Please notice:

D.The Word of God Will Do Its Part.

"For the word of God is quick (alive) and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." - Hebrews 4:12

E.The Holy Spirit Will Do His Part.

"And when he (Holy Spirit) is come, he will reprove (convict) the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." - John 16:8

F.God Will Do His part.

"I (Paul) have planted, Apollos watered; BUT GOD GAVE THE INCREASE." - 1 Corinthians 3:6

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

G.Can We Be Trusted To Do Our Part?

"But speaking the truth ('Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved') in love (not getting upset and angry when there is no immediate response)... "in simplicity and godly sincerity..." - 1 Corinthians 1:12

Then depend on God to give the increase "in demonstration of the spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4). God, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God will do their part, if the preacher and evangelist will do theirs.

More times than not, I have had those come for baptism or counseling, only to find they were saved two or three weeks prior. What a tragedy it would have been to have judged that service a failure because there was no outward response! A service is never a failure as long as God's Word is proclaimed. Many a preacher looking for an immediate response has been discouraged needlessly. There is a time of planting, a time of watering, and God can be depended upon to give the increase, "My word shall not return unto me void, saith the Lord" - Isaiah 55:11

Allow me to illustrate with an incident I experienced some time back concerning having people forward. We had an evangelist come for meetings held from Sunday to Wednesday. Prior to the meetings he had almost insisted that he give the invitation. I related to him that we did not invite people to come forward; but rather, invited people to trust Christ in their seats. If he would do it that way, fine. At the Sunday morning service, he gave the invitation to come forward to be saved. There was no response.

After the service we ate together and I, again, emphasized to him that we did not invite people to come forward to trust Christ; but, asked them to trust Christ in their seats. Again, there was no indication on his part that he would not follow our procedure. At the Sunday evening service the same thing occurred. After three verses of a hymn, he had not even hinted you could be saved without coming forward. His whole invitation rested upon coming forward for salvation. No one had responded. He then announced we were going to sing five more verses before closing. At that point I went to the pulpit and finished the invitation. Needless to say, he was very upset and so was I. The next day I called him at the motel and asked him if he would come prior to the meeting and we could discuss the invitation. He refused; and advised me he had been highly insulted and this was the first time anyone had ever interfered with his invitation! He informed me he would not continue the meetings, before I could inform him of the same thing!

I related to him that he also was the first evangelist who refused to tell people they could be saved without coming forward. I asked him if we could discuss it personally instead of over the phone. He would not agree to that and left that night. I finished the meetings myself. My only reason for relating this is to point out that this problem was the direct result of the traditional public invitation to walk to the front of the church. The invitation has never changed in God's Word, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). This excludes doing, working, or walking to obtain salvation.

One must come to Christ without anything but faith; and receive everything (eternal life); then the love of Christ "constraineth us" to do, work, and walk with Him, and for Him. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 we are told,

"For the love of Christ constrained us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead: (14) And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." (15) The public invitation most certainly effects the evangelist and the preacher in many cases.

The Proposed Invitation

3. The Proposed Invitation.

Since a multiplicity of churches and people have only experienced a "coming forward" to be saved, may I only emphasize that God can be trusted to save a person in church the same way one is saved in their home. I may, by some, be accused of being bigoted or narrow-minded because of infringing upon this patent tradition. Since there is only one way to Heaven and that being through the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6), I believe there can only be one scriptural invitation; and that being to believe in Christ, plus nothing! May I propose that the church invitation be the same as an individual invitation at home. At the conclusion of every Sunday service, an invitation for salvation is given in our church. No matter what the message, whether dedication, salvation, prophecy, service, or whatever— an invitation to receive Christ as Savior is always given.

At the conclusion of the message, the congregation is advised that in a few minutes we will bow in prayer. Salvation is then explained and the lost encouraged to receive Christ as their Savior as we bow in prayer. While their heads are bowed, I ask if any are receiving Christ at this time. If so, I would like to pray for them in the coming week, and they may indicate it by raising their hand. I will explain that we are not going to embarrass them in any way; and no one will come back to them to bring them down to the front. We do not have "interested parties" walking up and down the aisles; or tapping people on the shoulder.

They are also informed that raising the hand does not save them or have anything to do with their salvation. It only indicates to the pastor they are receiving Christ by faith; if they wish to indicate their decision. I may then rejoice with them and pray for them in coming weeks.

I assure them I will not call out their name or draw attention to them in any way. If hands are raised, I simply acknowledge them by saying something like, "Thank you, I see that hand," and the hand is put down. As we close in prayer we simply ask God's blessing on those who trusted Christ as Savior. I very seldom ever use the hand raising. In our church we usually have the closing prayer, and then dismiss with the congregation standing and singing a closing hymn. Just prior to the closing hymn, I encourage anyone present to contact me if they have any questions at all, or would like a home visit. They may tell me on the way out, and I will be happy to help them.

I have learned to trust the Word of God to bring those back who were saved. It is amazing the amount of people who will contact the pastor of their own free will when they are not pressured. I am never disappointed if no hands are raised, because many are saved who do not raise their hands. Many times the reason for this is, they have raised their hands before in a church service only to have someone tap them on the shoulder and try to persuade them to go to the front of the church. If the Word of God is preached and I have prepared myself with study and prayer, the service will always be a success. If I do my part, I can rest assured that God will do His. In conclusion may I propose:

Give those in church an "equal opportunity. Dispense with foolish questioning of the congregation which has no value.

Always give an invitation to trust Christ.

Never get discouraged because there is no immediate response.

Learn to trust God's Word yourself. His Word we preach is sharp and powerful, let's trust what we preach to others. (Hebrews 4:12).

Study, prepare, and preach the Word, and the service will never be a failure. To think the service is a failure will be to think God's Word is a failure. (2 Timothy 2:15).

Trust God to give the increase. (1 Corinthians 3:6-7)

Trust the Word of God to bring people back. If the people are hungry and you feed them, they will be back for more to eat. A steady growth will last longer than the big explosion of gimmicks and high-pressure persuasion.

Let us recognize that water baptism is the scriptural public profession; not coming forward.

Keep the service within the length of time specified. Why send someone away angry unnecessarily.

Keep the invitation simple. Remember "Profoundness is not profundity unless it is pruned in simplicity."

Remember, the practice of coming forward for salvation is as much a tradition to the independent, fundamental churches as the traditions practiced by the Roman Catholic Church.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the TRADITION of men, after the rud-iments of the world, and not after Christ. - Colossians 2:8

God made the plan of salvation so simple that a child can understand it. We are expected to present this salvation to others as God gave it to us, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" - Acts 16:31

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the SIMPLICITY that is in Christ."- 2 Corinthians 11:3

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." - John 15:5 God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

"Whenever Christ Called People, He Called Them Publicly"

V. "WHENEVER CHRIST CALLED PEOPLE, HE CALLED THEM PUBLICLY"

I have heard one former evangelist say repeatedly, "Whenever Christ called people, He called them publicly." Then the audience was invited to come forward, publicly, to the platform to receive Christ. Is this statement true? No! It is not true; and further-more, it is very misleading.

Nicodemus.

In John 3:1-36, we have the record of Nicodemus coming to Christ. In John 3:1-18, I do not find anything about "confession;" but, only "believing" to obtain salvation.

Notice in John 3:15, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

John 3:16 says the same, "...Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:18 states the same "He that believeth in him is not condemned..." Not once did Christ mention confession to Nicodemus for Salvation; but, only belief. The Samaritan Woman.

In John 4:1-54, we have Christ meeting the Samaritan woman by herself, after the disciples had left Him and gone to town to buy some groceries (John 4:8). In John 4:14, Christ used the literal water to illustrate a spiritual truth.

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

Christ then tells her about her five past husbands and the one she is now living with, unmarried. (John 4:17-19). She then recognizes He is the Messiah (John 4:25-26). The disciples come back from town and the woman leaves to go to town. When she arrives, her voice echoes through the town,

"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29).

Notice that Christ did not tell her to go to the city and confess Him as the Messiah. She did it on her own, going to the lost, not the saved. Several things happened:

Many of the Samaritans believed because of her testimony. (John 4:39).

Many came out to talk with Christ, Himself, before they would believe. Notice in John 4:41-42,

"And many more believed because of his (Christ's) own word. (41) And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." (42) Christ did not call her publicly to do anything. He was talking to her privately.

She didn't go to a church full of saved people; but, to the lost people in the town and witnessed to them.

Witnessing was the result of salvation not, a condition to receive it.

Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael.

We find another example in John 2:37-51. Andrew went to his brother, Peter, and told him they had found the Messiah, and brought Peter to Christ. Christ encountered Philip and said, "Follow me." Philip then located Nathanael and witnessed to him and brought him to Christ.

I don't see anything in this passage to qualify the false statement made by the noted evangelist, "Whenever Christ called people, He called them publicly." This is a deliberate deception. Why is this done? This is done to foster a TRADITION adopted in many churches to get people to the front for the public invitation.

I have only given three of many examples that I could use to illustrate how misleading the false statement made by the former evangelist is. This false statement is built upon the sinking sand of TRADITION!

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." - Colossians 2:8

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." - John 3:16 God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

Terminologies

VI. TERMINOLOGIES Introduction

The Soul, Spirit and Heart Explained

Terminology Examined

Textual Exposition

Introduction

Introduction.

"Let Jesus come into your heart." This has probably become one of the most commonly used phrases in Christianity. It is used quite often when inviting people to trust Christ as their Savior, yet the terminology is not found in the Bible. When I was in Bible college, I was talking to a young boy about Christ. I told him he could know he was going to Heaven if he would only invite Jesus to come into his heart. He looked at me for a few seconds, then asked me, "How do I invite Him to come in?" No one had asked me that question before and, quite frankly, I was stunned. I repeated what I had just told him, that all you have to do is invite Him into your heart.

He then asked me, "How do I know if He came in or not?" My answer was, "Because He said He would." As the conversation went on the boy asked me to show him where Jesus said He would come into his heart. At this point I was praying desperately, "Lord, where is that Scripture that says you will come into his heart?" Scriptures that state "with the heart man believes" were coming into mind, such as Romans 10:10, "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Also, Acts 8:37, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart..." As hard as I tried, I could not think of a single verse to show him that said "Let Jesus come into your heart."

I finally explained to him that what I meant was, if he would believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay for his sins, he would never perish but have everlasting life. This he understood and received Christ by faith.

I remember I was anxious to dig into my Bible and find that verse that states, "Ask Jesus to come into your heart." I was convinced it was there and that I had read it many times. I was disappointed in myself that I could not remember where it was found. As I checked the approximately 717 times the word "heart" was used in the Old Testament and about 105 times it is used in the New Testament, I could not find one place where it said, "Let Jesus come into my heart."

I believe this was the first time I realized how confusing this had been to the boy. Here I had found myself using traditional terminology that I had learned, instead of the simple Word of God. Even though my motives were right and I was sincere, my terminology was wrong and confusing.

We will examine a little later the Verses that state, "You believe with the heart." Using the phraseology, "Let Jesus come into your heart," presents many questions and difficulties which we will look into shortly.

Before we proceed into these two areas, it is imperative to understand what the Bible is referring to when speaking of the soul, spirit, and heart. Let us briefly examine each one of these. As we shall see, the soul is the seat of one's emotions and desires. The spirit is the seat of one's intelligence, and the heart is the seat of man's conscience.

The Soul, Spirit, and Heart Explained

2. The Soul, Spirit, and Heart Explained.

A.The Soul (Seat of Emotions and Desires).

The soul is connected with our thinking and is that conscious life that God has created within man.

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." The Word of God lets us know that the soul can be...

Grieved,|"And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the LORD: and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel" - Judges 10:16

|

Weariness and bitterness of the soul,

"My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul"- Job 10:1

|

Desiring,|"But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth" - Job 23:13

|

Boasting, and joyful,

"My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad" (Psalms 34:2). Joyful, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God..." -Isaiah 61:10

|

Sorrowful,|"Then said he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful..."- Matthew 26:38

|

Troubled,|"Now is my soul troubled..." - John 12:27

|

Vexed,|"The man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul is vexed within her... - 2 Kings 4:27 b

|

When our soul is grieved, weary, desiring, joyful, sorrowful, and etc., it is connected with our thinking. It is not our pumping heart muscle, but rather that conscious life that is within man. The word "soul" is also used in referring to the individual as a whole being. (James 5:20; Romans 13:1;

Ezekiel 18:20; Numbers 31:28). For example: Have you ever heard someone make the statement, "Oh look at that poor soul!" It is an expression that is referring to the person in general and not the soul specifically. In Revelation 16:3 we find

"And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea."

This is a person alive that died physically in the sea by drowning. This has no reference to the soul itself specifically. The reason is, the soul itself never dies. In Revelation 6:9; Revelation 10:1-11 we find some people who had died physically, but John sees and hears them in Heaven; very much alive,

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: (9) And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"(10) The body is the means through which we express our feelings and desires which come from our soul. When the body dies, the soul and spirit depart. In Revelation 6:9; Revelation 10:1-11, these people had received Christ as Savior and were seen alive and talking while "absent from the body, but present with the Lord." This is the confidence Paul, the Apostle, had when he said in 2 Corinthians 5:8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." When one dies who has rejected Christ, their soul and spirit also leaves the body and goes to a place of torment. In this place of torment they are just as much alive as they were on earth in their body. Here is a literal account of just such a man. We have the record found in Luke 16:22-24,

"...the rich man also died, and was buried (i.e., the body only); (22) And in hell (lit. Hades) he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. (23) And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." (24) Read the whole account from Luke 16:19-31. As far as life after death is concerned, the only difference between the saved and the lost is their location. One is in Heaven, the other in torment. As the soul and spirit never die, death of the body only released them to a different location to live eternally.

I think it would be noteworthy, at this point, to acknowledge the Jehovah's Witnesses' attack upon this man who went to torment. They teach the soul and spirit accompany the body into the grave and remains there until a general resurrection. They explain away Hell, teaching the lost will never be tormented eternally for rejecting Christ. Concerning Luke 16:19-31, they teach this is only a parable.

How does the child of God answer their false teaching concerning Luke 16:1-31? We should be ready at all times to answer such attacks upon God's Word. In 1 Peter 3:15 we are told,

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

Let us point out several reasons why Luke 16:1-31 is not a parable, but a literal account of a lost man who went to torment.

If one would make an exhaustive study of all the parables in the New Testament, you would find that no parable ever uses a proper name. There are no exceptions. In Luke 16:1-31 there are two proper names used, Abraham and Lazarus. You cannot find this principle violated anywhere when you make a complete study of the parables. No, this is not a parable; but, a literal account of a real man who rejected Christ and has been in Torment almost 2,000 years.

The word "parable" is from the Greek word "PARABOLE" which means "to lay along side of," "to liken to," and "to compare." A parable is used to compare and convey and illustrate a Biblical, literal truth. If this were a parable, which it is not, then it would be illustrating a truth which would be worse than that of the illustration, or parable. Saying it is a parable would only make the torment worse than is described here. One must remember that the Jehovah's Witnesses' eternal life is predicated upon their own humanistic, good works, and not the grace of God. Is it any wonder they want to do away with eternal torment?

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" - Romans 5:1 The peace the Christian has with God comes by faith in Christ. Jehovah's Witnesses try to have peace with God by doing away with Hell and establishing their own good works.

This literal account agrees totally with other Scriptures concerning the subjects of Torment and Hell, as the following:

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of ETERNAL FIRE." - Jude 1:7

". . . I am tormented in this FLAME." - Luke 16:24 b

"Then shall he say also unto them (lost) on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into EVERLASTING FIRE, prepared for the devil and his angels." - Matthew 25:41 In conclusion, man's spirit and soul never die, they only change location upon death, to Heaven or torment. The soul and spirit never goes with the body into the grave, for the body cannot die while the spirit is present.

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:26).

Man and animals both have souls; but only man has a spirit. The soul of an animal is connected with the body. The soul dies with the body of an animal. Remember, the soul and spirit are not the human, pumping heart.

B.The Spirit (The Seat of One's Understanding and Intelligence).

This is where man differs from animals. In 1 Corinthians we are told,

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit..." - 1 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Corinthians 2:10 a When one is saved, they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who illuminates our understanding of the Bible. We can now understand the things of God; whereas before, the Bible seemed like a Book of mysteries. So it is when the Lord made man, He gave us the human spirit of intelligence that enables us to reason and understand things. Notice in

Job 32:8, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

Animals do not possess this spirit even though they have feelings, emotions, and desires from the soul. In Psalms 32:9 we read,

"Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee."

Believe me, I know horses have no "understanding" in the Biblical sense! I believe I can verify this with a personal illustration. A friend and I went horseback riding one day. The people who owned the horses were relatives and had wanted to have the horses ridden periodically. The horses needed to be kept in the habit of being ridden.

Needless to say, it turned out to be a disaster. My friend got on his horse first with no problem and went trotting across the field very nicely. By the way, we were riding bareback with only a bridle. I stepped up on top of a picnic table and climbed on mine. I tapped him gently in the ribs with my heel and we were "full-throttle" immediately. I was yelling, "Whoa, Whoa," and "Stop, Stop" at the top of my lungs and pulling back on the reins as hard as I could, but that horse did not have enough understanding and soon we parted company! My ride lasted a total of about 45 seconds.

Wild animals act upon a God-given instinct to hunt and etc. Domestic animals do things by habit and relate certain things together. I had a Siberian Husky whom we taught to do various tricks for a piece of candy. These things are not things that are comparable to the spirit that is in man. For example, what animal can learn a foreign language, invent a car, build plants, invent electricity, build a home, draw blueprints, understand mathematics, and etc? This kind of intelligence is from the human spirit that only man possesses. In Hebrews 4:12 we read,

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Bible teaches us that the Word of God is so sharp that it could even divide the soul and spirit. But, to the contrary, we have no Biblical evidence they are ever separated.

C.The Heart (Seat of Our Conscience).

We want to emphasize again, this is not the heart muscle. When the Word of God uses the word "heart," it is referring to a person's conscience and reasoning. It is that inner part of the spirit.

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." - Romans 2:15

"Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." - Hebrews 10:22

"But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts ... (6) And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" - Mark 2:6; Mark 2:8

Terminology Explained

3. Terminology Examined.

When we use terminology that is not found in God's Word, it can become very confusing, and should be avoided when dealing with the lost.

Here are a few of the problems that can arise when we ask people to let Jesus come into their hearts.

A. How Does A Person Let Christ Come In?

Does one make a surgical incision and let Christ in, then sew it back up? You may think I am ridiculous to say this, but it must be remembered that children do not always understand what you mean when this is said.

Children who have been in Sunday School have seen "pictures of Jesus" and have a right to wonder, "Does Jesus in His body come inside of my body and live?" "Is this how He comes into my heart?" Of course, the answer is, "No." When a person speaks of the heart, children associate this with the heart muscle, and so do many adults. Children, especially, have a tendency to take literally what we tell them because of their inability to think in abstract terms.

If a person you were witnessing to asked you, "How do I let Jesus come in?" How would you answer them? When this happened to me I had to explain to the young boy what I meant! I had assumed he would have understood that I meant for him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but I was so wrong. This confusion could have been avoided if I had avoided unscriptural terminology that I had coined from hear say, not the Bible.

B. Does Christ Actually Come Into Your Heart?

The answer is, "No." It is the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. The confusion that may arise is a doctrinal issue. The Holy Spirit is never to be invited to indwell us for salvation. God has promised to indwell each person with the Holy Spirit, simultaneously with their belief in Christ. Receiving the Holy Spirit is the object of God's promise, not our invitation.

Before Christ ascended back to Heaven, He left this promise in John 14:16-18 a, that the Holy Spirit within would take the place of the Savior Who had been with them,

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter (i.e., the Holy Spirit), that he may abide with you for ever; (16) Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. (17) I will not leave you comfortless..." (lit. an orphan). (18) Now, every believer in Christ is indwelt and sealed with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13 makes this clear ...

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."

There is no Christian who is not indwelt with the Holy Spirit. Romans 8:9 makes this perfectly clear, "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

Remember, nowhere are we ever commanded to pray for the Holy Spirit to indwell us. Pentecostals err in this point when praying for the Holy Spirit and seeking evidence by the speaking in so-called tongues.

Why should we ask someone to invite Jesus into their heart? It is not Jesus, but the Holy Spirit, that indwells us. Are we not paralleling the error that Pentecostalism makes in praying and pleading for the Holy Spirit? This thought leads me to my next point.

C. How Would You Know If Jesus Came Into Your Heart?

Suppose that you just invited a person to "Let Jesus come into His heart" and they asked you this question, "How do I know when He comes in?" Of course, there are Scriptures to support what you meant, but there are no Scriptures to support what you said. With this terminology, the only way this person would know if Jesus came into his heart is, if the person had a feeling or sensation. Then their salvation would be based on a feeling and not the Word of God. This would unequivocally parallel the same error as Pentecostalism in desiring the sensation of tongues as evidence they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

There is no terminology or phraseology as simple and clear as God's Word Itself when leading a person to Christ. How can one rephrase or improve upon Acts 16:30 b, 31a?

..."Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..."

They did not say, "Let Jesus come into your heart" and then have to worry about confusion and explain what they meant by what they said.

4. Textual Exposition - "Believing With All Your Heart."

Let us now examine the verses that deal with believing with the heart.

Acts 8:37, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest (be baptized). And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

"Believing with all thine heart" simply means, "I have no reservations or doubts within my conscience that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Philip was satisfied by this testimony that he was saved and then proceeded to baptize him.

Romans 10:10, "For with the heart (conscience) man believeth unto righteousness..." The word "heart" here is not the pumping muscle of the body, but the conscience of man. Your conscience will always tell you to do right, but only the Word of God tells us what is right. The soul desires peace, the spirit understands Christ died for us, and our heart (the seat of our conscience) believes unto righteousness.

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). In Luke 24:25, we find believing is done with the heart (conscience), "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

Ephesians 3:17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts (conscience) by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love." To understand what it means by the statement "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," one only has to read the surrounding verses. First of all, it is addressing the believers at Ephesus, and instructing them how to grow and be strength-ened. Ephesians 3:16 states,

"...to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

In Ephesians 3:18-19 the results of Ephesians 3:16-17 are given.

"(Believers) May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; (18) And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." (19) The way to comprehend the length, width, depth, and height of God's love is to allow Christ to dwell in our conscience (heart) continuously. In other words, we are thinking about Christ at all times, which will strengthen us so we will be rooted and grounded in love.

Ephesians 3:17 in no way implies Christ comes into our pumping heart with the asking. "Christ dwelling in our hearts (conscience) by faith" simply means, from the context; we, as Christians, need to be thinking about Christ at all times. If we do, we will be strengthened and able to better comprehend His love for us.

Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." When one reads this verse, the word "heart" cannot be found. It is, nevertheless, almost universally used for the lost, implying the door is the door to their heart which they must open to let Christ in.

If we examine Ephesians 3:14-21 of the same chapter, we find that these Scriptures are describing the condition of a local church located in Laodicea. The instructions to this church are not primarily to the lost; but rather, to the Christians who were in a backslidden condition. They were not cold; but lukewarm. Christ wanted them to be hot (i.e., lit. boiling).

It would be like the Christian today who goes to church once a week, but does nothing for the Lord the rest of the week. Christ wants us to serve Him every day, not just on Sunday. There are three words that support the fact he is speaking to Christians and not the lost. In Ephesians 3:15 we read, "I know thy WORKS." Since he is exhorting them to have good works, it has reference to service and not salvation, for salvation cannot be purchased with good works. Romans 4:5 states,

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him (Christ) that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." In Ephesians 3:19, the word "CHASTEN" is used. God punishes the lost, but chastens His children, "As many as I love, I rebuke and CHASTEN: be zealous therefore, and repent."

"Chastening" is the Greek word "ELEGCHO" which means to train up a child or educate by discipline. Also, the word "repent" is the Greek word "metanoeo" and means to think differently or reconsider.

The Lord is telling them they are acting like children and they need to reconsider what they are doing and start serving Him. The context here is referring to serving since we are saved, not

accepting Him to be saved.

3. In Ephesians 3:20 b, the word "SUP" is used in reference to fellowship, not salvation and son-ship, "I will come in to him, and SUP with him, and he with me." In 1 John 1:7 we read, "But if we walk (obey) in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another..." When we sit down together to eat (sup) with one another, we have fellowship with one another. The Lao-diceans were not serving Christ; therefore, there was no fellowship with Him. He wanted them to open their lives to serve Him, and this they were not doing. When Christ stands at the door and knocks, He is simply trying to get their attention so they will "REPENT" (i.e., change their mind) and "OPEN THE DOOR" (yield to His will by obeying Him) and "SUP" with Him and He with me" (so we can have fellowship with Him)

We have been so prone to relating the word "heart" to the pumping muscle that it is sometimes not realized how confusing it may be. This does not mean that people are not saved when this terminology is used. I am only suggesting that using Scriptural terminology such as "believe," "trust," "faith," and etc. for salvation would be less confusing.

Statements like "You can believe in Christ, but miss Heaven by 18 inches," or "You can have a head knowledge, but not a heart belief," are unwise. When one begins to analyze these statements, they become very hard to explain. They are confusing, and many times what is meant by these kinds of statements is an outright contradiction to God's teaching concerning salvation.

I have inquired of many people concerning the statement "head knowledge, but not a heart belief," to ascertain what they meant by that statement. Not all, but the majority by far, thought it meant that if a person was not serving Christ, they probably were not saved. One can easily see by this how misleading and confusing this kind of terminology can be. Just because a person is not serving Christ does not mean they have not received Christ by faith and are not saved.

Some time ago I was listening to WCRF, a Christian radio station from Cleveland, Ohio. This station is sponsored by Moody Bible Institute and they were airing an interview with a Senior girl attending Moody Bible College in Chicago, Illinois. Within her testimony she related how at the age of about 7 years, she was told to ask "Jesus into her heart" and she would go to Heaven.

She went on to say that she had a problem with that and later realized it was not asking Jesus into your heart that makes you a Christian, but acknowledging that Jesus Christ died in her place. She stated that a person could ask Jesus into their heart and go on through life thinking they were a Christian when they were not. She explained that a person must understand that Jesus Christ became their substitute on the cross as payment for their sin. So, just asking Jesus into your heart without comprehending the purpose of Christ on the cross would not give one eternal life.

Since this happened to her, it is easy to see why she emphasized that "A person must be careful when a child asks Jesus into their heart, that they understand that it is the substitutionary death of Christ on the cross that provides salvation, and not just repeating these words."

She further commented that she does not even use that phrase any more, but emphasizes the substitutionary payment of Christ on the cross to eliminate confusion and misunderstanding. In conclusion, the interviewer and the young lady agreed that some children take literally the terminology "Let Jesus come into your heart" and that we need to be clear on our message of

salvation. The terminology we use is probably far more important than we care to realize. This may sound harsh, but I believe we, as Christians, have become a little sloppy in our terms and phrases when presenting Christ. When we hear others using phrases over and over, it can become part of our vocabulary without really recognizing it.

I believe this has happened down through the years—as I found myself quoting cute little clichés that I had inherited and incorporated by hearing them time and time again.

I am very grateful to a little boy, years ago, who asked me, "How do I let Jesus come into my heart?" When I had to explain to him what I meant, this stimulated my thinking.

I pray that this section on terminologies will stimulate your desire to search the Scriptures, examine the terminology you use, then draw your own conclusions based on "thus saith the Lord. In conclusion, we need to get back to the basics of expounding the Word of God and when we are finished, invite people to trust Christ—period! We need to dispense with all the foolish questions that amount to nothing and actually bind the invitation. Let us just plainly invite people to trust Christ.

If you want to be a reaper,

Plant God's seed God's way.

And you will reap the harvest

In Heaven on that day.

Don't count the numbers on the wall;

They just don't tell the story.

For those who fear the altar call

Might not make it into Glory!

God's Work Done God's Way Yields A Bountiful Harvest.

A Clear Gospel Produces Believers; Not Counterfeit Christians.

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