

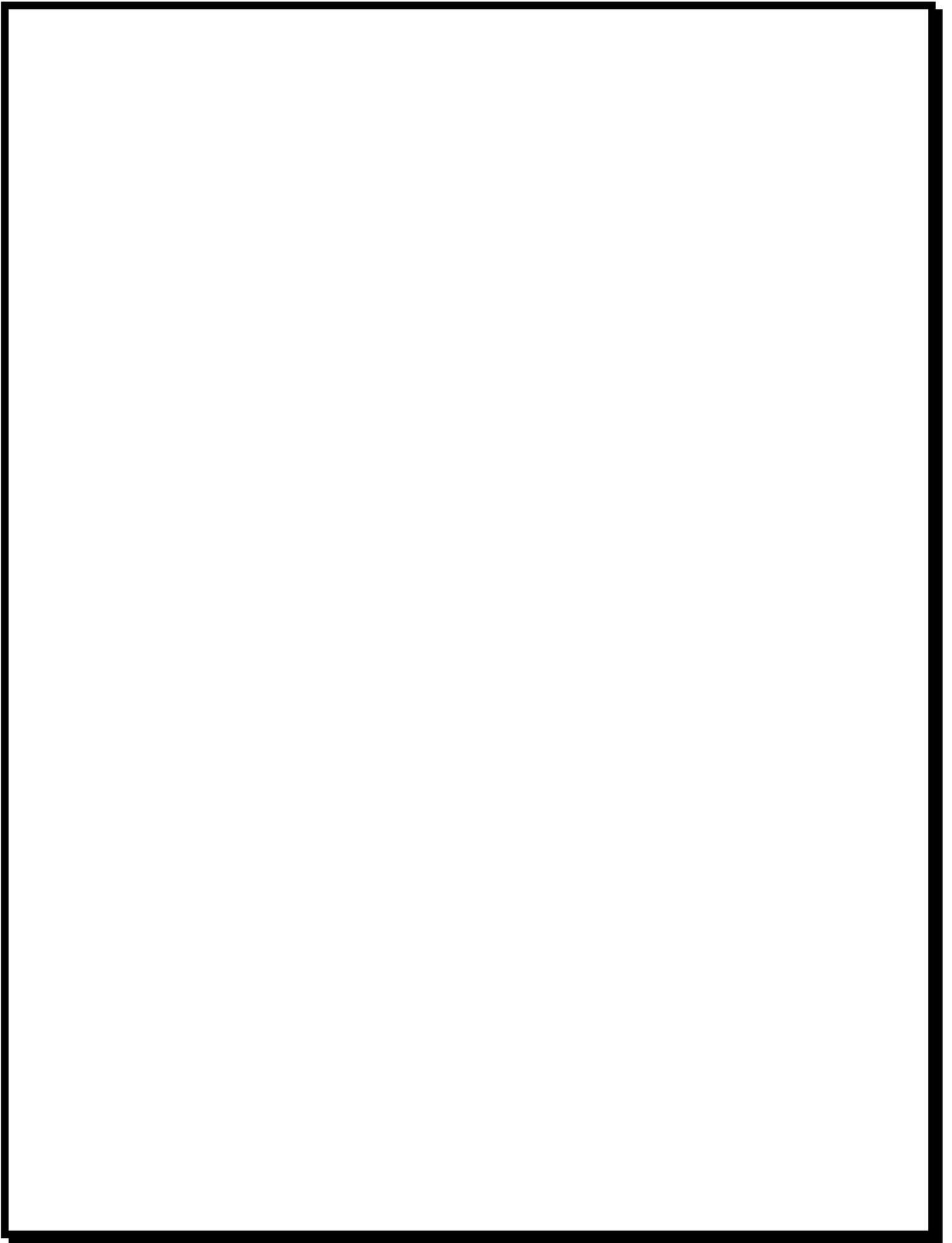
Once Saved



Always Saved

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By George A. Evans



Once Saved



*Always Saved
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This is one of the more long-standing controversial philosophies that has plagued Christianity throughout the years. Taught as truth, some Christians have accepted the teaching that once an individual has received salvation, that individual cannot lose that salvation. These Christians have subscribed to the doctrine, *once saved always saved*. These same Christians believe that once an individual has received salvation, he or she is eternally secured in Christ through his sacrifice on the cross, while other Christians believe that it is possible for an individual to lose his or her salvation once they have received it. So the question becomes, *Is it possible for a Christian to lose his or her salvation once he or she has received it?*

Laying Down The Groundwork

In order to answer this question, there are some things that must be considered first. Our ability to seek and find the truth is limited to our ability to think and our ability to reason. Certain things that we hear trigger predictable responses that will automatically close our minds to the information being presented because we tend to see it as a threat to our very basic religious foundation. The one thing that we need to do is to make sure that our foundation is solid and the biblical information that we have is clear and without ambiguity. One weak spot in our foundation or one bit of misinformation can cause our whole house to crumble. As the foundation fails, so goes the integrity of the structure. As our knowledge becomes cloudy, so goes the veracity of our belief system. We have built our belief system on those fundamental truths that we learned when we first believed and those truths became the building blocks of our foundation. When the building blocks of our foundation fail due to misinformation or misinterpretation, so goes the truths that were used to support our belief system. We have to make sure that our foundation is solid and that our beliefs are well grounded in the truths contained in the Word of God. Words can be manipulated to say many things, but there are times when our minds manipulate the things we hear to suit our belief system, like a self-preservation mechanism that only allows us to process information that does not threaten our core belief system. Instead of seeking and accepting truth, we seek and accept things that fit into our perception of truth.

This has been a problem for many of us. We have become so comfortable with the limited knowledge we possess that we are just sitting back waiting for Jesus to return and take us home to glory. Our limited knowledge, wisdom, and understanding have made it easy for Satan to infiltrate the church and do those things that continually leave us in a state of disbelief. We are to the point where we are not sure what to believe any more. As we continue to accept the changes that are occurring in our churches, in our communities, in our society, and in the world, we have become easy prey for all the false teachings, doctrines, edicts, and theologies. We accept them without question and recite them without fully understanding them. Most of the time, we have no idea what we are reciting because we do it out of obedience. But who are we being obedient to, God or man? Are we being obedient because God has told us to be obedient

or because man has told us to be? How would we know, when we do not even open up our Bibles to check up on the information that is presented to us. Because it sounds biblical, then it must be true and it must be from God. Knowledge is power, misinformation destruction. We are being destroyed because we have limited God and limited ourselves. We have failed to follow the things God has set forth for us in his word. He has provided everything we need in order for us to fully know him and to worship him in spirit and in truth. We have failed to open our minds to him, choosing to limit ourselves to that which we think sounds more like something that God would tell us as opposed to looking at what he has actually told us in his word. We recite things that make us sound intelligent to others but we lack full revelation and the ability to understand those things. In our attempt to explain those things of God, we have accepted phrases like Immaculate Conception, the Virgin Birth, Christ Incarnate, and the Trinity on faith because they sound so spiritual and because they sound as if they have come from God. Are these phrases biblical terms that the Holy Spirit has revealed or terms that have been manufactured by the wisdom of the world?

There are so many questions and so few answers. What are we to do? We ask our spiritual leaders to aid us in our understanding of such phrases only to hear that, *you just have to take these things on faith* response. How can we take on faith something that we do not understand in the first place? Or, we get that *God's ways are higher than your ways and his thoughts are higher than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:8-9)* response. If this be the true interpretation of this passage, then are we condemned to a lifetime of ignorance when it comes to the things of God? There are many who share in the belief that *someday they are going to see the Lord face to face and at that moment, they will see everything clearly*. They believe that *at that moment, they will receive all the answers to all of their questions*. The concern is that someone has convinced them that they have to wait until they get to heaven before they can get all of the answers they could not get while they were here on the earth.

I know for me, when I first started my journey, I found it difficult to get answers to some of those tough questions, but one of the responses that I would usually get was, *all answers would be revealed in the sweet by and by, when we all get to heaven*. It really bothered me that I could only get the answers that I wanted or thought I needed to know when I got to heaven and not

while I was alive where I believed I could benefit the most from them. The problem that I had with this ideology was that I had to die and make it to heaven before I could get any answers to any of my most difficult questions. I could not believe that some of my questions about God had to wait until I got to heaven before I could get an answer. I could not believe that some of my questions about faith had to wait until I got to heaven before I could get an answer. I could not believe that some of my questions about Jesus had to wait until I got to heaven before I could get an answer. I could not believe that some of my questions about being on the right path since narrow is the gate and Jesus is the way had to wait until I got to heaven before I could get an answer. Somehow, that just did not seem fair to me. It seemed like every interesting question that I had then, got the same response from those I believed should have had the answers. The more I pressed, the vaguer the responses became until I got those two well-known responses. They would say to me, ***Well you know Brother Evans, God's ways are higher than your ways and God's thoughts are higher than your thoughts. But if you take it on faith then the answers that you seek will be revealed to you in the sweet by and by.***

It was hard to accept having to wait until the sweet by and by before I could get answers to my questions. It was hard to accept having to wait until I got to heaven because no one here on earth could answer my questions. As a baby in the Word, who had just started this journey, that response and similar ones did nothing to increase my belief or my faith. If anything, it had an opposite effect. It left me feeling unsure about what I was supposed to do, unsure about how to do what I was supposed to do, unsure about when to do what I was supposed to do, and unsure where to do what I was supposed to do. Most importantly, it made me unsure about everything that I was supposed to do period, especially since no one could tell me what I was supposed to do. Here was the biggest problem with all of that waiting until I got to heaven thing; what if I did not make it to heaven? Without that knowledge, can you see how difficult it was for me to do those things that were required of me, like pleasing and worshiping God? How can I worship God if I do not know what I need to do to worship him? What this lack of knowledge did do, was make it very easy for me to be controlled. It made it very easy for me to be molded. It made it very easy for me to be manipulated. It made it very easy for me to be put inside of that box of traditional thinking, that box of traditional ideology, and that box of traditional Churchianity. It made it very easy for me to become a puppet. But remember, every puppet has

a puppet master. So, what does any of this have to do with God? What does any of this have to do with Jesus? What does any of this have to do with the questions at hand? Think about this, if God does not reveal to us the things that we must do, then how would we ever know what to do? Instead of doing the right things, we could unknowingly be doing the wrong things. God says that his people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge, not because there is not enough knowledge available, but because his people have rejected the knowledge. God has made this knowledge available to us so that we can use it before we get to heaven. God has made this knowledge available to us so that we can use it while we are still living in order for us to do the right things. Jesus says that if anyone has knowledge of him, then that individual also has knowledge of the Father (***John 14:7***). But if the knowledge that we have of Jesus be fictional, then the knowledge we have of the Father be fictional also. And if the knowledge that we have of Jesus be based on a lie, then the knowledge we have of the Father be based on a lie as well. Jesus says from this point forward, we have knowledge of the Father and we have also seen him. Does this mean that we do not have to wait until we get to heaven to get those answers that we have been looking for? Would this be considered a face-to-face encounter with the Father while we are still here on the earth?

Since it appears that we do not need to wait until we get to heaven in order to get any of those answers that we seek, then let us venture out, in an effort to locate the answers to the questions at hand. We know that the Bible is our source of knowledge, which is given to us by inspiration (***II Timothy 3:16***). It tells us all about the things of God. It is multidimensional, full of God's instructions for man. It is forever pregnant, giving birth to more and more revelation each time one seeks to find enlightenment. God has instructed us to ***study to show ourselves approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth (II Timothy 2:15)***. If we can rightly divide the word of truth, then it is possible for us to wrongly divide the word of truth as well. This is why we have to make sure our foundation is solid and that our beliefs are well grounded in the truths contained in the Word of God. This is something that we have to do; no one else can do this for us. This is why we need to open up our Bibles and check things out for ourselves, no matter the source. As I said earlier, words can be manipulated to say many things; we just need to make sure the ones that we accept are in line with the rightly divided word. We need to make sure the information we accept is proven to be true and not contrary to existing information that has been

proven to be true. Once accepted, we need to use it to measure or compare other related and relative information or scriptures against. We must be open to all information pertaining to the Word of God because we may gain additional knowledge to or a better understanding of the existing knowledge we already possess. There is information available that can be added to or enhance our existing knowledge. Yes, there is plenty of bad information or misinformation pertaining to the Word of God, but we will never know if the available information can help us if we are not open to it. Some of our best and most helpful information will come from some of the most unlikely places or sources. We need to keep only the information that affirms our belief system. It is imperative that we delete all other information that does not measure up against the Word of God. Just because it comes in does not mean we have to keep it. This is something that must be done to ensure that our foundation is solid and that all of the biblical information we have is clear without any ambiguity. This is something that must be done to ensure that our beliefs are well grounded in the truths contained in the Word of God. This is something that must be done to eliminate all misinformation and misinterpretations so that we can have the opportunity to increase our knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. God tells us to get these things for ourselves.

Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline (turn away) from the words of my mouth. Forsake her (wisdom) not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding (Proverbs 4:5-7).

To obtain wisdom one must earnestly seek it, much like a prospector searching for gold. The search is directed by the conditions for obtaining wisdom (***Proverbs 2:1-4***). The consequences of obtaining wisdom are then listed which include knowledge of God (***Proverbs 2:5-8***) and right conduct (***Proverbs 2:9-22***). Once we get wisdom, God tells us that with all of our getting, we also need to get understanding. Once we get the wisdom and the understanding, the knowledge will come. Knowledge can only come by seeking. We have to seek, we have to look, we have to examine, and we have to study, if we want knowledge to come to us. If we do not seek, we will never find that for which we seek. We need to seek the truth. We need to find the truth. We need to know the truth. When seeking the truth, we have to examine every possibility that we or

anyone else can imagine, whether it be conceivable or whether it be inconceivable. Once we have identified all the possibilities, then we can eliminate all those that are not supported by the Bible and by our revelation knowledge. Notice that I am not saying eliminate all those possibilities that do not agree with what we have been taught or led to believe. What I am saying is to eliminate all those possibilities that are not supported by something that we, ourselves have found in the Bible. Once again, God told us to study so that we could rightly divide the word of truth. If we do not have any other possibilities before us when we start then we have nothing to divide. And if we do not study then we will not have the revelation knowledge needed to rightly divide the word of truth. God wants us to operate in revelation knowledge. Revelation knowledge comes through the word of God.

The Bible is not a history book but a mystery book. It is an instruction manual, designed to tell his children all they need to know to achieve the maximum benefits in this life. God has put all of these wonderful things in this book and has told us to find them. God tells us to attend to his words because they are full, abundant life to those that hunt for, look for, or seek those words (*Proverbs 4:20-22*). He also says to study the word of truth to know what it says and what it means. One must immerse himself in his word by hunting for, looking for, and seeking the answers that God has provided through his instruction manual. In his word, there are hidden wisdoms that only the true seeker can obtain. One must be able to know the difference and rightly divide the word of truth. When one learns to divide the word of truth in an effort to spiritually discern and properly interpret it, then the keys to unlock the mysteries of the Bible will be revealed. This is the revelation knowledge that I speak of that God wants us to have. If we do not know the Word of God then we will not have the revelation knowledge we need, and we will be at a disadvantage. God is our only source for revelation knowledge. All other sources are guides, leading us to some destination. We really need to make sure that the final destination is where we want to go. As we prepare to seek the answers to our earlier questions, let us keep in mind those things that have been discussed thus far.

What Is In A Word?

Now, in order to get the complete understanding of this controversial philosophy, we need to make sure that we are all on the same page. We need to make sure that we are discussing the same things, using the same terminology. For example, those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation have used terms such as *true believer*, *believer*, *nonbeliever*, *doubter*, and *make-believer*. While each of these terms has a specific meaning that is unique to the individual that is using it, that meaning may not be one that is shared by all. This is not to say that the definitions we will discuss here are the intended meanings, but by stating the obvious, we will be able to concentrate solely on truths that are in the scriptures and not be distracted by misinformation, misinterpretations, and misunderstandings.

So, what exactly is a true believer? What is the difference between a true believer and a believer? Why do those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation make a distinction between a true believer and a believer? What distinguishes a true believer from that of a believer? While most people are familiar with the term nonbeliever, what is the purpose for the term, doubter? How does the nonbeliever differ from the doubter? And finally, who or what exactly is a make-believer?

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a *true believer* is *a person who professes absolute belief in something or a zealous supporter of a particular cause*. The Free Dictionary defines a *true believer* as *one who is deeply, sometimes fanatically devoted to a cause, organization, or person*. Now, according to the Collaborative International Dictionary of English, a *believer* is defined *as one who believes; one who is persuaded of the truth or reality of some doctrine, person, or thing*. In theology, a *believer* is defined *as one who gives credit to the truth of the Scriptures, as a revelation from God; a Christian, who, in a more restricted sense, receives Christ as his Savior, and accepts the way of salvation unfolded in the gospel*. By definition, there does not appear to be enough evidence to make a clear distinction between the two terms, but for whatever reasons, those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation have stated that there is one in existence. However, for those who believe that an

individual cannot lose his or her salvation, the true believer is the only one who is saved and who cannot backslide or commit a sin that would rob them of their inheritance; their salvation.

According to the Encarta Dictionary, a *nonbeliever or unbeliever* is defined as *somebody who does not believe in an established religious faith or in conventional beliefs*. More specifically, a *nonbeliever or unbeliever* is defined as *someone who does not believe in God or in a religion*. The Encarta Dictionary defines *doubter* as *someone who feels unconvinced or uncertain about something, or think that something is unlikely*. According to the Free Dictionary, a *doubter* is *someone who habitually doubts accepted beliefs*. Again, by definition, there does not appear to be enough evidence to make a clear distinction between these two terms, but for whatever reasons, those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation have stated that there is one in existence. And lastly, while there appears to be no tangible definition for the word *make-believer*, we can use the definitions of both words combined to conclude that the word means *one who pretends to be something that they are not*. In this case, the *make-believer* would pretend to be a believer, something that they are truly not. Once again, for those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation, the doubter or the make-believer never had salvation to start with so therefore they could not lose something that they did not have to begin with.

This is the primary reason we need to ensure that we are all speaking the same language, using the same terminology, and talking about the same things so we can eliminate as much confusion as possible so that there be no miscommunication, misinterpretation, or misunderstanding. Therefore, before we go any further, we need to define some of the key terms that we will be discussing. In order to ensure that we are talking about the same things, we must first understand exactly what salvation is and how one obtains it. Once we ascertain what salvation is and how it is obtained then we can establish if it be possible for someone to lose his or her salvation. According the Encarta Dictionary, *salvation* is defined as *the act of saving someone or something from harm, destruction, difficulty, or failure*. In theology, *salvation* is defined as *deliverance from the power and penalty of sin; redemption*. In Christianity, *salvation* is defined as *deliverance from sin or the consequences of sin through Jesus Christ's death on the*

cross. So basically, we have salvation being the act of saving and delivering someone from the power and the consequences of sin, which was accomplished by the death of Jesus on the cross.

Another term that we need to define is *free gift*. According to the Encarta Dictionary, *free gift* is defined as *something that is given to somebody that does not cost anything, something given to somebody that is free of charge*. Another term that we need to define is *confess*. And according to the same dictionary, *confess* is defined as *admitting to having done something wrong; acknowledging something to be true; admitting ones sins; or acknowledging faith or belief in something or somebody*. The next term is *mouth*. It is defined as *the organ of speech, used to form words with the tongue and lips in order to utter something in a loud clear voice or to utter something in a silent voice in an attempt to avoid being heard*. The *mouth* is also used to *form words in order to mumble something in an indistinct way or to say something with groans that cannot be uttered or expressed in words or articulate speech*. After that, we have the term *believe*. According to the Encarta Dictionary, *believe* is defined as *accepting that something is true or real; being of the opinion that something exists or is a reality, especially when there is no absolute proof of its existence or reality; or having religious faith*. The next term that we need to look at is *heart*. This term is defined as *the basis of emotional life; the source and center of emotional life, where the deepest and sincerest feelings are located and a person is most vulnerable to pain*. Then we have the term, being *saved*, which is defined as *somebody or something rescued or spared from harm, danger, situation, or activity*. In theology, *saved* is defined as *somebody freed from the consequences of sin*. The last term that we will define is *righteousness*. The same dictionary defines *righteousness* as *being considered correct, justified, or morally upright*. The hope is that these definitions will aid us in discovering the truth that is throughout the Bible by eliminating the possibility that we may be misinformed, eliminating the possibility that we may misinterpret, and eliminating the possibility that we may misunderstand. It is also the hope that these definitions will aid us in rightly dividing the word of truth so that we are not trapped, unable to think outside of traditionalism, denominationalism, and Churchianity. When it comes to finding out about salvation, we need to make sure that we are on the correct path and not one that has been manufactured for us by a system with contrary beliefs, misguided values, unethical practices, and overstated theologies.

Cause And Effect

We read in the book of *Romans* that everything was set in motion by the actions of one man.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude (likeness) of Adam's transgression, who is the figure (a type) of him that was to come. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift (But the free gift is not like the false step). For if through the offense of one (Adam) many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift (the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned): for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man's offense death reigned by one (the one); much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offense of one (one false step) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (one righteous act) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous (Romans 5:12-19).

Adam is the one who started all of this; he be the cause of everything. When he sinned, sin entered the world and affected the entire human race. With the sin, death entered the world and affected the entire human race. Therefore, through one man, sin entered into the world and death caught a ride, both affecting the entire human race, *for all have sinned*. Here is something that took revelation for me to understand. I have heard the phrase, *for all have sinned* all my life but never understood it completely. Let us examine this phrase, *for all have sinned* for just a minute. First, we need to define sin. The word is usually defined as *personal sin*, which may be one of commission (*doing something that is prohibited*) or one of omission (*failing to do what is required of you*). Sin may also express itself in either an act or attitude, for example, going

astray like a wandering sheep (*Isaiah 53:6*), transgressing or overstepping the law (*Psalms 51:1; Luke 15:29*), and trespassing, which means exercising our own will in the realm of divine authority (*Ephesians 2:1*). Ask yourself, what sin does a baby who is born, takes one breath, then dies, commit? What did the baby do that was prohibited? What did the baby fail to do that was required of him or her? What sin did this baby commit? Could there be another definition or meaning for the word *sin*?

When Adam sinned, *sin* entered the entire human race, and his *sin* spread death throughout the entire world causing *all to sin*. We see that it was Adam's *sin* that caused this, because although people were committing sin from the time of Adam until Moses, God did not judge them guilty of death for breaking his laws; because he had not yet given his laws to them, nor told them what he wanted them to do. When their bodies died, it was not for their own sins since they themselves had never disobeyed God's prohibition against eating the forbidden fruit, as Adam had. It further states that the *sin* of this one man, his disobedience to God's prohibition, caused death to be king over all and caused many to be made sinners. According to the passage, we are not sinners because of the things that we have done or do. The overt act of committing sin is not what makes us sinners; we were made sinners by the sin of one man, Adam. We had no choice or say in the matter. Adam was the fountainhead of the human race. He was created in a state of spiritual and moral innocence, in the image of God, after his likeness, with the appearance of age, with a high level of intelligence, and with the ability to communicate with God. When he fell, he brought the curse of sin on the entire human race, making everyone who came after him a sinner, *for all have sinned* because of what Adam did. Therefore, the only sin that the baby is guilty of is the sin that was passed down to him or her by Adam, the father of mankind.

The passage goes on to tell us of the free gift of God, which is not like the transgression of man. Because of one man's sin, the death penalty was brought to many, but the gift of God is so much more. This gift by grace, which is given by one man, Jesus, freely takes away all sins and gives glorious life instead. This gift does not have the same effect as the sin of the one, Adam. The judgment, which Adam provoked, resulted in condemnation to all, but the gift resulted in the justification for a multitude of transgressions. The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to be king over all, but all who will take God's gift of forgiveness and acquittal are kings in life (*reign*

in life) because of this one man, Jesus. Yes, Adam's sin brought punishment to all, but Christ's righteousness makes men right with God, so that they can live. Adam caused many to be made sinners because he disobeyed God, and Christ caused many to be made acceptable because he obeyed God.

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (I Corinthians 15:21-22).

Please note what this passage says, paying special attention to the words that were used. All of the different translations of the Bible that I have access to, translates this passage in a similar fashion, using pretty much the same words. The one translation that I found to be the best at illustrating the interpretation is *The Living Bible*, which says:

Death came into the world because of what one man (Adam) did, and it is because of what this other man (Christ) has done that now there is resurrection from the dead. Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, being members of his sinful race, and wherever there is sin, death results. But all who are related to Christ will rise again (I Corinthians 15:21-22 - TLB).

Because of what one man, who was a representative of mankind, did in the beginning, death was passed on to all mankind. And because of what this other man, who was also a representative of mankind, has done, all have been giving a second chance. Just as Adam was our representative in the beginning, Jesus was our representative on the cross. Because of what one man did, because of one man's offense, because of one man's transgression, sin entered the world and death caught a ride. And because of what another man did; because of this other man's obedience and because of this other man's righteousness, God's gift of salvation entered the world and everlasting life caught a ride. Although the two events share many similarities, there are major differences in the outcomes of each one. Each event started with a single man. Each man, who was a representative of mankind, had an important choice to make. Each choice had a monumental consequence associated with it. Each consequence affected all of mankind, because each man was representing all of mankind at the time they made their choice. So many

similarities but yet so many differences. The one choice led to judgment and condemnation for all men while the other choice led to a life-giving acquittal and the justification of life upon all men. It was by one man's choice that many were made sinners while it was by the other man's choice that many could be made righteous. The first man's act caused death to be king over all. The other man's act made it possible for those who choose to accept God's gift of forgiveness and acquittal to be kings in life. Please note that these two acts are not coextensive. Here is what I mean. What Adam did affected all who are a part of the human race. What Jesus did, while it is available to all, only affects those who are believers, those who are in Christ.

But praise be unto God for the second man who ended all of this. Technically, I guess it would be incorrect to say that he ended all of this because that is not exactly what has happened. The correct way to say this would be to say, But praise be unto God for the second man who made it possible for all of this to end. Because of the second man, the gift of grace has been made available to all. Because of the second man, the gift of forgiveness has been made available to all. Because of the second man, a new nature for man was created and a new man was created. Because of the second man, we have the opportunity to put on this new nature for man, this new man who is renewed in the knowledge of righteousness, which is after the likeness of this second man who created this new nature for man. Just as the first man created a new nature for man that was fixed in the knowledge of sin and not one fixed in the knowledge of righteousness, the second man created a new nature for man that was renewed in the knowledge of righteousness and not one fixed in the knowledge of sin. Just as the first man was responsible for the creation of the new nature for man that was fixed in the knowledge of sin, it was the second man who is responsible for the creation of the new nature for man that was fixed in the renewed knowledge of righteousness.

The Free Gift

If we were to ask about salvation, we would probably get a different answer with each person or collective group that we asked. Some will tell us that we need to repent for our sins in order to get this free gift. Some will tell us that we must confess our sins so that we can be cleansed from all unrighteousness before we can get the free gift. Others will tell us that we have to say a simple prayer in order to get the free gift. There are those who will tell us that we have to attend a particular church, usually theirs, in order to receive the free gift. Some will tell us that in order to get the free gift, we just need to believe in Christ Jesus. Some will tell us that our salvation is based on our good works or good deeds. Yet others will tell us that to get this free gift, we just need to ask Jesus to come into our hearts and guide us to all truths. Some will tell us that there is a process, steps, if you will, that we have to go through in order to get the free gift. There are some that will tell us that we have to repent, some that will tell us that we have to be baptized, and some that will tell us that we have to do both before we can get the free gift. And believe it or not, there are some who will tell us that we have to be able to speak in tongues in order to get the free gift. All of this is well and fine, but what does God say about this free gift.

We now know about the free gift, which is defined as *something that is given to somebody that does not cost anything, something given to somebody that is free of charge*. We know about salvation, which is defined as *the act of saving someone or something from harm, destruction, difficulty, or failure*. We can conclude that this free gift of salvation is actually the act, done by Jesus through his death on the cross, which has saved and delivered us from the power and the consequences of sin, and has been made available and given to us free of any charge.

For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him (I Thessalonians 5:9-10).

According to this passage, we now know that God did not predestine us to wrath, but intended for us to obtain salvation through the actions of Jesus, who died on our behalf so that regardless of whether we be awake or sleeping at the time of his return, we can live with him and share in

the promise. We see that God intended for us to obtain this salvation from the beginning and he intended for us to receive it through the actions of the one man who died on our behalf. We know that this salvation was the result of the actions of the one man who made it possible for all mankind to have the opportunity to receive this free gift.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (age); looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar (his own special) people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14).

We see from this passage that it was the grace of God that made itself visible for all mankind to see. We also see that it was the grace of God that made itself available for all mankind to see. And it was this same grace that brought with it eternal salvation, the free gift that is being offered to all mankind.

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. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 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 3:16-18).

For God loved the world so much that he gave to it, his only begotten son, so that anyone whomsoever who believes in him, the only begotten son of God, will not perish but will have everlasting life. Imagine that, all we have to do is to believe in him, the only begotten son of God and we will not perish but have everlasting life. Can it be that straightforward? Can it be that effortless? Can it be that simple? According to this passage there is no eternal doom awaiting those who trust him to save them. It is this act that Jesus has done that appears to be our saving grace. And it is this saving grace, our salvation, that we are to accept and trust as

being sufficient enough to rescue us from godless living and sinful pleasures in order that we may live wisely, righteously, and godly in this present age. And because we believe, we have eternal salvation, the free gift that is being offered to everyone. This does not appear to be the case for those who do not trust him, for they have already been condemned because they do not believe. There has to be more to this than just believing, it just cannot be this simple, can it?

In the sixteenth chapter of the book of *Acts*, there is a story of a slave girl who had a spirit of divination. Basically, she had a spirit that gave her knowledge of the future. Her masters made huge profits off her fortune-telling abilities. On this one particular day, she came to Paul and them, crying out and saying that they were the servants of the Most High God and that they were showing everyone the way of salvation. After doing this for several days, Paul, who became greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit that was within her, ***I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.*** And the spirit came out of her that very same hour. Now with their hopes of great wealth shattered, her masters grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the judges in the marketplace. And when her masters got them before the judges, they said, ***These men, who are Jews, are greatly troubling our town, teaching customs and rules of living which it is not right for us to have or to keep, since we are Romans.*** And when they had finished, all the people rose up and attacked Paul and Silas. The judges took their clothing and ordered that they be beaten. When they had received the number of ordered blows, they were casted into prison. The jailer, who was given charge to keep them in prison securely, placed them into the inner prison with chains on their feet.

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises (were praying and singing hymns) unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands (chains) were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang (ran) in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they

said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house (household). And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat (food) before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house (Acts 16:25-34).

Most of us are familiar with this part of the story and the teachings that have come about because of it. There is one part in particular that I would like concentrate on, which I believe is vital to understanding exactly what the Bible has to say about salvation. But before we go there, let me point out some things that were mentioned earlier that I believe are equally as important to our discussion. One of them is something that the slave girl who had a spirit that gave her knowledge of the future had said.

The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation (Act 16:17).

In her statement, the slave girl, who had the spirit of divination, tells us who Paul and Silas are and what they were doing. Did you catch what is being said here? This slave girl, who had a demon spirit within her, was able to tell us that Paul and Silas are *servants of the most high God*. And this same slave girl, who had a demon spirit within her, was able to tell us that Paul and Silas were *publicly declaring the way of salvation*. In the beginning of the chapter, we read that Paul and Silas went from city to city making known the gospel.

And so were the churches established (strengthened) in the faith, and increased in number daily (Acts 16:5).

It appears that they were able to get out the message of salvation to the masses. As they went about sharing the gospel, the churches strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers. According to the Encarta Dictionary, *faith is the belief in, devotion to, or trust in somebody or something, especially without logical proof*. In this case, the faith or the belief was in the gospel

that was preached by Paul and Silas. We see another example of this when Paul and Silas spoke to a group of women.

And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont (customarily) to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted (met) thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto (to heed) the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought (begged) us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us (Acts 15:13-15).

We see here that a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of fabric dyed in purple, was from the city of Thyatira. Thyatira was the first European convert of Paul that worshiped God and was the home of a noteworthy Christian Church and one of the seven churches, which was in Asia that is mentioned in the book of *Revelation (Revelation 1:11)*. We see that Lydia's heart was opened as she listened carefully to the things that were spoken by Paul. She accepted what he had preached and was led to believe. Please make note of her statement when she said, *If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord*, we will examine this statement more closely a little later in our discussion.

As for that one part that I believe to be vital to our understanding of exactly what the Bible has to say about salvation is the question that the jailer asked Paul and Silas, when he discovered that they were all there, just after Paul had asked the jailer not to harm himself after the earthquake. The jailer had fell down before them and asked, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* And they replied, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house (household)*. According to what Paul and Silas said, all the jailer had to do to be saved was *to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. We see in the passage that Paul and Silas spoke to him and his household and his whole household believed (*Acts 16:34*). Do you think that Lydia from the city of Thyatira and her household received the same message? Can you see any similarities in the household of the jailer and the household of Lydia? Do you think the message was the same for

the churches that were strengthened in faith as Paul and Silas went from city to city making known the gospel?

What I find most interesting is the fact that there is no mention of the things that some say has to be done in order to receive salvation. While feeling regret about our sins and completely changing our ways are important in the Christian walk, repenting for our sins (*II Corinthians 7:10*) does not appear to be a requirement for receiving the free gift of salvation. The same appears to be true about confessing our sins so that we can be cleansed from all unrighteousness (*I John 1:9*). Although it is important to confess our sins, it does not appear to be a requirement for receiving the free gift of salvation either. Prayer is most important, as we are to pray without ceasing (*I Thessalonians 5:17*), however repeating a simple prayer that someone has told us to pray or repeating the Sinner's Prayer will not get us the free gift of salvation. Neither will attending a particular church bring us the free gift of salvation. While it is very important as a Christian to do good works and to do good deeds, there is no evidence that salvation can be obtained by our good works (*II Timothy 1:9*) or by our good deeds (*Romans 3:20*). Believe it or not, there is nothing in the Bible that says we need to ask Jesus to come into our heart and guide us to all truths in order for us to receive the free gift of salvation. There is no process, steps, progression, or sequence of events that we have to follow or go through in order to get the free gift. And while repentance and baptism are essential in the Christian walk, there is nothing that suggests that we have to do one or the other or both of these before we can receive the free gift of salvation (*Acts 2:38*). And believe it or not, even though speaking in tongues has a purpose, it is not something that can be done before we obtain salvation.

It really does appear that all we have to do to receive the free gift of salvation is to just believe on Christ Jesus. It really does appear to be that straightforward, that effortless, and just that simple. It really does appear that we have to believe in order to receive the free gift of salvation. But is this what the Bible confirms?

Two Parts

According to what we have discovered thus far, in order for us to obtain this free gift of salvation, it appears that we need only to follow a straightforward, effortless, and simple procedure that requires us *to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*. Is this what the Bible truly says about obtaining salvation? Or is this some type of misinterpretation? How can we be sure that we are on the right path and not one that has been manufactured by a system with contrary beliefs, misguided values, unethical practices, and overstated theologies? According to the tenth chapter of the book of *Romans*, salvation is obtained by observing to do the following commands.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (put to shame) (Romans 10:9-11).

Now according to this passage, *if you shall* acknowledge faith or belief in somebody (*confess*) *with* the organ of speech, used to form words with the tongue and lips in order to utter something in a loud clear voice, to form words in order to mumble something in an indistinct way, or to say something with groans that cannot be uttered or expressed in words or articulate speech (*your mouth*) *the Lord Jesus, and shall* accept that something is true or real; being of the opinion that something exists or is a reality, especially when there is no absolute proof of its existence or reality (*believe*) *in* the basis of emotional life; the source and center of emotional life, where the deepest and sincerest feelings are located and a person is most vulnerable to pain (*your heart*) *that God has raised him from the dead, then you shall be* rescued or spared from harm, danger, situation, or activity; freed from the consequences of sin (*saved*). So, if we tell others with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord and we believe in our heart that God has raised him from the dead, then we will be saved. It is by believing in our heart that we become righteous with God and it with our mouth that we tell others of our faith, confirming our salvation. It is with our heart that we believe and obtain righteousness. It is with our mouth that we make our confession and

obtain salvation. And we are told by the Scriptures that no one who believes in Christ will ever have a reason to be disappointed.

It appears that God has made the instructions to receiving the free gift of salvation pretty simple and very easy to follow. So, let us break all of this down to see if we can determine exactly what all of this means. The first thing that we notice is that there appears to be two parts to this salvation thing. In the first part, it appears that God wants us to say with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. Notice this is not something that we are allowed to think. He is very specific in his instructions that we have to confess this with our mouth. But what about those who cannot speak through their mouth, you might ask? If you noticed in the definition of *mouth*, the mouth can also be *used to form words in order to mumble something in an indistinct way or to say something with groans that cannot be uttered or expressed in words or articulate speech*. If God can understand the Spirit, who makes intercessions for us with groaning that cannot be uttered (*Romans 8:26*), then I think that it is pretty safe to say that he can understand someone who attempts to confess with groans that cannot be uttered also, especially since he knows that secrets of the heart (*Psalms 44:21*). I believe the important thing here is the fact that the individual puts forth the effort to say what he or she was suppose to say with groans as opposed to doing nothing. But, as far as our confession that Jesus is Lord, look at what Jesus says about that in the Gospels.

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

Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God (Luke 12:8).

Jesus says that if we publicly acknowledge him before men, he will acknowledge us before the Father, who is in heaven. He will even acknowledge us before the angels of God if we only acknowledge him before men. This first part sounds pretty simple to me, confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord. In the second part of this salvation thing, it appears that God wants us to believe something about Jesus. There are two proposals I would like to submit to you for your

consideration that I believe will help us with the understanding of the workings of this free gift of salvation. First, I submit this to you; the thing that we are to believe in our heart is the same thing that we are to confess with our mouth. I know that it says we are to believe in our heart that ***God hath raised him from the dead***, but this is really a part of our confession before men. I know this sounds as if I am trying to rewrite what God has placed before us, but let me assure this is not my intent. God tells us to study so that we can rightly divide the word of truth, which means that we might have to separate or split the word of truth into two or more parts just to get the correct interpretation or understanding.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh (Luke 6:45).

According to this passage, out of the abundance of that which is in the heart, that is what will be brought forth. This means that whatever is in abundance within our heart, that will be what comes out of us. So, a good man will bring forth good deeds from the abundant goodness that be stored up in his heart. But to the contrary, an evil man will bring forth evil deeds from the abundant wickedness that be stored up in his heart. And it is from the heart that a man speaks, be he good or be he evil. So, can you see why I believe that the things that we believe in our heart is the same thing that we are to confess with our mouth? I believe God wants our confession to be what we have in our heart and not something that we recite because we believe it to be a part of this salvation. The scriptures are clear; for out of the abundance of what we have in our heart will our mouth speak. Look at what God has said here. If in our heart, we truly believe that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the dead, then from our mouth will we truly make that confession, because that belief is what is in abundance in our heart. Now, if we half-heartedly believe that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the dead, then from our mouth will we half-heartedly make that confession, because that belief is what is in abundance in our heart.

Now do not think for one second that God can be fooled. I know that there are some who believe they can pull the wool over the eyes of God, because they have been able to cover the

eyes of man. Let me assure you that this is not the case with God because he has covered every possible scenario conceivable. And the interesting thing about God is the fact that he has put all of this in the Bible. God has set up this awesome system where each one of us is responsible for our own actions or inactions, in some cases.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Galatians 6:7).

God has giving us this warning. He is telling us not to be deceived or be misled into believing that someone can get away with mocking God, scoffing at God, or laughing or saying things to show he or she believes God to be stupid or deserves no respect. He is telling us that this belief is so far from the truth. He tells us that whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap. There is a reason why we have to make such a confession with our mouth. It could be because God knows that we will eventually say those things that we have in abundance in our hearts, whether they be good or they be evil. This does make me wonder.

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness (licentiousness), an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mark 7:20-23).

Now, we have just learned that ***out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks***. And we have learned that ***out of the evil treasure of the evil man's heart comes forth that which is evil***. And we see here that ***all the evil things come from within, within the heart and it is these evil things that will defile the man***. God is telling us that when a man's heart contains an abundance of evil treasures such as ***evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness (licentiousness), an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness***, he will bring forth that which is evil. You see when all we have is evil within our heart, then all we can bring forth is evil. And because these evil things are in abundance in the our heart, we will eventually speak them, which in this case is not a good thing.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof (Proverbs 18:20-21).

So, it is with one's mouth that an individual can speak life into his or her life and it is with one's mouth that the same individual can speak death into his or her life. The words that we speak will produce a crop much like that of the farmer who plants a field. What we plant will be what we reap. If we plant death, then death is what we will reap, in its full measure. And if we plant life, then life will be what we reap, in its full measure. The words that we speak are like seeds that are planted in the ground. And from those seeds, we will reap that for which we have sown. So, if our heart contains an abundance of evil treasures, we will, at some point, bring forth those evil treasures when we speak, sowing them and eventually reaping what we have sown.

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Galatians 6:8).

According to this passage, anyone who sows to the work of the flesh (*Galatians 5:19-21*), will from that harvest reap destruction, but anyone who sows to the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*), will from that harvest reap everlasting life. Can you see this system that God has established? This is a self-contained system that possess all the required things needed to function independently, as well as a self-sustaining system that is able to provide for and maintain itself. If salvation is what we truly want, the system itself will be able to determine if we have done all that is required to obtain salvation. God has told us that it is with the heart that we believe and obtain righteousness, and it is with our mouth that we make the confession and obtain salvation.

Salvation is a gift that was paid for by Jesus when he died on the cross and it is being offered to all mankind. Salvation is a free gift that God has made available to everyone, so it cannot be that difficult to obtain and it has to be even easier to receive. Salvation has to be just that simple because God wants everyone to be saved (*I Timothy 2:4*). The second of the two proposals that I would like to submit to you for your consideration is the fact that the two parts to the salvation thing are in reverse order. It is very hard to confess something first that we do not already

believe in our heart. This is way I believe that a switch in the order is necessary. Salvation has two basic parts and if we switched them around, I believe it would be easier for us to understand. First, we would believe with our heart. And second, we would confess with our mouth, for it is with the heart that we believe and obtain righteousness and it is with the mouth that we confess and obtain salvation (*Romans 10:10*).

Remember that a certain woman named Lydia, the seller of fabric dyed in purple, who was from the city of Thyatira, even she believed and then confessed. There was this statement that I asked you to make note of earlier, *If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord*, because we would examine it a little more closely. If you remember, she accepted what Paul and Silas had preached and was led to believe. Would she not first have to believe before she could confess? Would it be possible for her to confess something that she did not already believe? If she was first led to believe then she could confess her belief. Now, in her statement she asked Paul and Silas to judge whether she had been faithful to the Lord. If she has just believed, then how could they judge her faithfulness to the Lord in such a short period of time? The answer is, they could not. The only thing that they could have judged in that short period of time would be her confession. And since the phrase *have judged* is a past tense designation, then the action has already occurred. At that point, she had already confessed what she was led to believe. With that being said, what she is really saying to them is *If ye have judge me to be unwavering in my belief to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there*. She confessed with her mouth what was in abundance within her heart.

There are many verses in the New Testament that tell us that salvation is obtained by believing in one's heart on the Lord and confessing the same with one's mouth. The simple truth is that we have to believe that Jesus has done the necessary things to save us from the consequences of sin and then we have to confess the same. Once we have completed this, the scriptures say we have obtained the free gift of salvation. Jesus has already paid the price for salvation, so there is actually nothing we can do to add to the debt or take away from that debt. We can however, accept what Jesus has done by believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth so that we can obtain the free gift that has already been paid for by him.

Is It Possible?

Now that we know what we have to do to obtain the free gift of salvation, we still have yet to determine the answer to the long-standing controversial philosophy that has plagued Christianity throughout the years; *Is it possible for a Christian to lose his or her salvation once he or she has received it?* Is it possible for a person to lose his or her salvation once they have obtained it? Is it possible for a person, who has been saved, to ever be lost? Is it possible for a person, who has received Christ as his or her personal savior, to lose his or her salvation? Is it possible for a saved person to sin to the point where they become unsaved or condemned? Is it possible for a person, who has obtained salvation and who has been born into the family of God to lose their standing in Christ? No matter how the question is asked, inquiring minds would like to know if the doctrine that teaches *once saved always saved* is a doctrine that is truly of God or one that has been created by man.

There are two schools of thought on this issue; the first one being from those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation; the other one being from those who believe that an individual can lose his or her salvation. Although it would be a very lengthy process to examine each and every passage that is used to support the belief system of each school of thought, we will attempt to examine a few of the more popular supportive ones. Those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation subscribe to the belief that once someone has received the gift of eternal spiritual life from God through the acceptance of Jesus, his son, that person can never be lost again.

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck (snatch) them out of my hand (John 10:28).

It is from this passage that those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation have created *the doctrine of eternal security*. Also known as *the perseverance of the saints*, this doctrine states that once an individual is placed in a state of salvation, that person will never lose his or her salvation. The doctrine states that an individual who has received Christ, who has been born of the Spirit, who has been born into the family of God, and who has been justified

through faith in Christ can never again be lost. The doctrine also states that an individual can be eternally secured because of the interpretation of the passage found in the first chapter of the book of *Philippians*.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform (complete) it until the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).

Those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation have interpreted this passage to mean that Paul was convinced that the work of grace that God had started in the true believer at his or her conversion would continue *until the day of Jesus Christ*, at which point God would finish his works in him or her. You see for them, they believe that our salvation does not rest on us but rest entirely on the workings of God. And because of this belief, they, those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation, believe that our salvation is fashioned through faith, with nothing able to separate us from the love of Christ (*Romans 8:35-39*).

Now we have come to the point where the lines that separated the two schools of thought have crossed each other to become one. Both groups agree that for an individual to be classified as a true believer, one who professes absolute belief in something or a zealous supporter of a particular cause and one who is deeply, sometimes fanatically devoted to a cause, organization, or person, he or she is required to do more than just say he or she is a believer. Both groups believe that anyone can claim to believe in Christ, but when a true conversion occurs, those results can be measured. Both groups appear to subscribe to the teachings that suggest the true believer can be measured by the fruit that he or she produces.

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening (ravenous) wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil (bad) fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good

fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7:15-20).

Because of this passage, both groups believe Jesus, during the Sermon on the Mount, was saying that the visible fruit that each individual bore would distinguish one from another; ***by their fruits ye shall know them.*** It has been taught that those who are truly saved, those who are the good trees, they will produce or bring forth good fruit. But for them who are make-believers, those who are the corrupt trees, they will produce or bring forth evil fruit. Both groups believe Jesus was instructing them as to how to measure the sincerity of an individual who claims to be a believer when he said ***ye shall know them by their fruits.*** Both groups appear to agree that anyone can claim Jesus as his or her savior, but this is where they appear to part ways again.

Those who believe that an individual cannot lose his or her salvation believe that only the true believer, the one who produces or brings forth good fruit is the only one that can receive the gift of eternal spiritual life from God and it is that person who can never be lost again. Everyone else are make-believers, pretenders who claim to believe in Jesus but who did not receive the gift of eternal spiritual life from God, making it impossible for them to lose that which they never had to begin with. On the other hand, those who believe that an individual can lose his or her salvation believe that an individual who claims to believe in Christ can receive the gift of eternal spiritual life from God, but that gift is lost if that individual does not bear or bring forth good fruit. And it is this individual that they, those who believe that an individual can lose his or her salvation, believe Jesus was speaking of during his Sermon on the Mount, when he said, ***Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*** This interpretation has given way to the belief that an individual can lose his or her salvation and be condemned to the lake of fire. Is it possible that this was not the intended interpretation of this passage?

There appears to be some interpretational issues with some of the passages used as proof text for both schools of thought. According to the passage found in the tenth chapter of the gospel according to ***John***, Jesus says that he gives eternal life to his sheep and that they will never perish. And because Jesus gives his sheep this eternal life, there is no man that can take his sheep out of his hands. While this is a true statement, it does not pertain to salvation as we have

defined it. Remember, salvation is something that we obtained by believing in our heart and then confessing that belief with our mouth. This passage is referring to the sheep that are saved, for only they are the ones to whom Jesus gives eternal life and it is them that no man will take out of his hands. You see, part of the problem is our inability to understand what God is actually saying to us and the misapplication of what we believe God has said to us. A shepherd will only tend his sheep; therefore, Jesus is referring to his sheep because he knows his sheep, his sheep hear his voice, and they follow him. It is these sheep that are saved whom he gives eternal life to and it is these same sheep that will never perish. Now I know that this might not be what you were expecting but in order to address this doctrine that teaches *once saved always saved*, we have to understand that there is a difference between salvation and being saved. Salvation is what you obtain, saved is what you are. This is not a play on words, but something that I believe will help us to understand this most controversial doctrine. Once again, salvation is defined as *the act of saving someone or something from harm, destruction, difficulty, or failure*. Saved is defined as *somebody or something rescued or spared from harm, danger, situation, or activity*.

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made (having become) a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree (Galatians 3:13).

Christ has brought us out from under the doom of an impossible system, the law, redeeming us from the curse of the law by taking the curse upon himself. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, rescued us from the danger of the law, and spared us from the consequences of the law. Christ has redeemed us, that is, made safe those who have obtained salvation, from the consequences of sin, therefore we are saved. And, we have been made acceptable despite what we may have done.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians 5:21).

We have interpreted this passage to mean that God took Jesus and poured into him the sins of mankind that we might, through him, be made the righteousness of God. And because of what Jesus did, we have the opportunity to be free from the consequences of sin, becoming servants of

righteousness and not servants of sin that we may be considered to be the *correct, justified, and morally upright* of God.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17).

We have been taught that if any man be in Christ, that is, when a man comes into a basic union with the risen Lord, he be a *new creature or a new creation*, where *old things*, that old life are passed away; and where we see *all things* that are, become new. This person, who is now in Christ, is considered to be a Christian or Christ-like.

So what exactly is a Christian? According to the Encarta Dictionary, a *Christian* is *defined as a person professing a belief in Jesus as the Christ, who has a belief in the religion based on the teaching of Jesus*. This word often used to describe someone who is religious or of high moral values has lost much of its meaning over time. The word has also been used to define a person considered to be follower of Christ; a person who has put faith and trust in Christ and his works. However, the lines between the secular definition of a Christian and the true born again follower of Christ have become indistinguishable. Deceptions, coupled with a lack of knowledge, have allowed Satan to reign supreme in redefining Christianity. Because Satan has blinded the minds of many Christians, he has been allowed to infiltrate the body of Christ with all types of unrighteousness. He has done a masterful job keeping the body of Christ divided and in total disarray. Just look at how many different denominations, faiths, baptisms, and gods there are within the so-called body of Christ.

One of the greatest deceptions of Satan pertains to the church and the many denominations that have manifested over the years. Jesus said, *if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand (Mark 3:25)*. With each denomination contributing something different, we have created a buffet of carefully worded interpretations, colorfully inspired explanations, sympathetically selective translations, and new teachings for a new generation served in some of the most creative combinations, where every individual is guaranteed to find something that will satisfy his or her palate and something that will quench his or her thirst. And this does not even

scratch the surface of what is available. People need to realize that during every free moment in this earth realm, Satan's only purpose has been to *deceive the world (Revelation 12:7-9; Revelation 20:1-10)*. He *deceives* the world by telling *lies*. If he can plant *a lie*, get you to accept it, then get you to act upon it, he can gain control of your mind in the battle for your soul. He wants you to think on things that are not true, keeping you confused, so that you will not know God's will for your life. No matter how trivial it may appear, everything is important when it comes to the things of God. Even a *lie* should warrant your full attention. It is the *lies* that have prevented many from discovering the truth. Could it be that those things that you never have considered to be important are more important than was first thought? Here is a minor interpretation that I never thought was important until the revelation came.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1 – American Standard Version (ASV)).

According to this passage, there is therefore now no condemnation that awaits me because I am in Christ. And because I be in Christ, then I know that I am a new creature or a new creation. And because I be a new creature or a new creation, then I know that I am a Christian. And because I be a Christian, then I know that I am saved by grace. And because I be saved by grace, then I know that I am born of the Spirit. And because I be born of the Spirit, then I know that I am not judge as a sinner. And because I be not judged as a sinner, be born of the Spirit, be saved by grace, be a Christian, be a new creature or a new creation, be in Christ and know that there is therefore no condemnation that awaits me, then I know that I have been justified through faith in Christ. And because I be justified through faith in Christ Jesus, then I know that I am forever resting in a state of salvation because the work of grace that God had started in me will continue until Jesus returns. And when Jesus returns, then I know that God will complete the workings that he started in me. But until then, I know that am eternally secure and that my salvation can never be lost because nothing is able to separate me from the love of my Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus.

And because of this interpretation, it has been taught that once I have been saved, I be forever saved. It has been taught that this doctrine is fully supported by the Bible and that is consistent

with everything the Bible says about mankind and about God. The doctrine attempts to show, through logic, that since I be inherently sinful, with my sinful nature rearing its ugly head from time to time, it would be impossible for me to live a sinless life through obedience to the Law (*Galatians 2:16*). And since no one can become right or be declared right with God because of the Law, then it is only through repentance and through faith in Christ, who takes away my sins, that I can be declared free from guilt. And since God's grace through Christ is sufficient to cover all of my past, present, and future sins, then there is nothing that I can do that God cannot forgive me of. The doctrine teaches that once I be declared free from guilt, then there is absolutely nothing that I can do that would cause me to lose that status. Is it possible that these are the facts? Or, could this all be fiction?

We have discovered what appears to be very strong evidence that supports the doctrine, *once saved always saved*. Amongst this strong supportive evidence, there appears to be an underlying issue that has flown under the radar and has allowed certain definitions to be rewritten. It appears that this doctrine has given mankind, his own free ticket to continue in the ways of the world because he has been saved through grace and is eternally secured, unable to do anything that would cause him to lose his status. It is as if this doctrine, *once saved always saved* has been created to appease the inherent sinful nature of mankind, while appearing to allow him to enjoy the benefits of the promise of eternal life. It is as if this doctrine, *once saved always saved* came into existence as a guarantee to mankind that regardless of what he does there is absolutely nothing that he cannot be forgiven of that would cause him to lose his salvation. And because of this doctrine, *once saved always saved*, a term was created to describe those who have obtained salvation but have continued to walk after the flesh (*I Corinthians 3:1-4*). They are called *carnal Christians*, which is another highly debated topic that appears to be interwoven into the very fabric of *the doctrine of eternal security*. It is believed that this *carnal Christian* is only able to comprehend the simplest of scriptural truths, while remaining like babies in Christ. Now the question becomes, *Who was it that created this doctrine?*

Another Class

Based on the interpretation of previous passage found in the eighth chapter of the book of *Romans*, we know that there are at least two classifications of people that exist in the world today, those who are not saved and those who are saved. But did you know that there is a third classification of people that is mention in the Bible. According to the *King James Version* of the passage we examined in the book of *Romans*, there is another group.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2).

Many manuscripts have omitted the words, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit* from their translation, even though some mention this omission in their footnotes. Many have argued in opposition of this third classification, stating that there are only two classifications of people; those who are in Christ and those who are without Christ. Previously, we discovered that there is therefore now no condemnation awaiting someone, who belongs to *them which are in Christ Jesus (one who has been saved through grace)*, however, we now see that there is a *qualifier* for *them which are in Christ Jesus*.

Referring to the basic rules of grammar for the principle of literally understanding Scripture will help us to rightly divide and discern this word of truth here. The word *who* begins the qualifier for *them that belong to Christ Jesus*. So, for there to be no condemnation for *them which are in Christ Jesus*, the *them which are in Christ Jesus* must meet some type of requirement. This means that *them which are in Christ Jesus* either meet the requirement or they do not. Because of the qualifier, there are now two classifications for *them which are in Christ Jesus*, (*believers*), those who walk after the flesh and those who walk after the spirit.

Note: This scripture refers to a contrast between the human spirit (spirit) and the human flesh, not the Holy Spirit (Spirit). There is never a contrast made between the

Holy Spirit and your flesh. It refers only to the spirit in the body that gives the body life. God will only deal with your spirit, never your flesh.

There is therefore now no condemnation to ***them which are in Christ Jesus***, who walk after the spirit, but this is not true for them who walk after the flesh. There is therefore condemnation to ***them which are in Christ Jesus***, who walk after the flesh. Also for ***them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk after the spirit***, they know of the two main laws that govern life. The first is the ***law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus***, which is where the life cycle is released. This is where healing is released and where one can find deliverance. Those who follow after this law, can expect to find blessings such as prosperity, health, life (***Deuteronomy 28:1-14***), and every good gift and perfect gift (***James 1:17***). The other one is the ***law of sin and death***, which is where sickness and disease are released. Those who follow after this law will find curses such as poverty, sickness, and death (***Deuteronomy 28:15-68***). For ***them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk after the flesh***, they only know of the one law that governs life. Because of ignorance and a lack of knowledge, many live under the law of sin and death. Because of ignorance and a lack of knowledge, many believe that they are living in accordance with the teachings and doctrines of Christ.

For they that are after the flesh do mind (set their minds on) the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (give life to) your mortal bodies by (or because of) his Spirit that dwelleth in you (Romans 5:5-11).

Imagine believing yourself to be a believer only to find out what you believed you were you were not because what you believed was based on untruths. Imagine believing yourself to be a

follower of Jesus only to find out that the one whom you claimed to follow was not the one that you needed to follow because the one that you followed was based on deception. Imagine believing yourself to be saved because you believed you joined the family only to find out that the family you joined was not the right one because the family that you joined was based on a lie. Imagine believing yourself to be free from condemnation because you are in Christ Jesus (*one who has been saved through grace*), only to find out that you have been condemned because you believed that you could walk after the flesh and not be condemned; all based on fiction. Imagine being held in captivity and not knowing it because you have rejected the knowledge that was needed to set yourself free. Imagine believing in a truth that has been manufactured by the great deceiver for the sole purpose of taking you out of the kingdom of God. Imagine not even being aware of any of this until it is too late. Many do not realize that there is an untruth, a deception, a lie that has been going on for so long that the lines between it and reality have become so blurred that one crosses between the two without the realization of either.

Without the knowledge as to the source of the problem, the deception continues. The misunderstood teachings, misguided theologies, and misinterpreted doctrines that have been introduced by Satan have blinded the mind of man to the truth. Because he is the father of lies (*John 8:44*), he has blinded many to the truth of the gospel of the glory of Christ and to the truth pertaining to the body of Christ. Because man did not control and maintain these truths contained in the wonderful gospel, Satan has divided the body of Christ (*the church*) into the many different factions that exist today. So now each faction believes they are a part of the kingdom of God when in fact, they are only deceived. Satan has them convinced that their *carnal* lifestyle, a lifestyle where they walk after the flesh, is acceptable in the sight of God. So convinced that they are confident they are heaven bound, without condemnation, regardless of what they do. Man continues to be played like puppets in a production for an audience of principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world, while the puppet master continues to lurk in the shadows, hidden from the world. The sad part is that man is completely unaware that any of this is taking place.

As you read the newspapers, magazines, and watch television, you will see the so-called carnal Christians caught in fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, debate,

deceit, and malignity. They have become whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, and covenant-breakers (*Romans 1:29-31*). And still they believe they are heaven bound without condemnation, regardless of what they do, because of the doctrine that says *once saved always saved*. They are convinced that once they have been placed in a state of salvation, they will never lose their salvation. They are convinced that since they have received Christ, since they have been born of the Spirit, since they have been born into the family of God, and since they have been justified through faith in Christ that they can never again be lost.

We have discovered that there is actually another classification that appears to have been created for those who have obtained salvation but have chosen to continue to walk after the flesh. This group has chosen to remain connected to the world. These are those purported Christians, the so-called carnal ones who are so connected to the world that we continually find them in the newspapers, the magazines, and on television. These are those purported Christians, the so-called carnal ones who are caught up in the temptations of the world, who are caught up in the lust of the flesh (*physical desire*), and who are caught up in the lust of the eyes (*personal desires*), and who are caught up in the pride of life (*self-interest*). The problem with all of this is the deceit that appears to be going on. It appears as if they, those purported Christians, the so-called carnal ones who walk after to the flesh, have elected to continue to feast on those things that appear to satisfy their palate and quench their thirst because they have been totally convinced that they, regardless of what they do, rest in eternal salvation. But again, one has to ask, *Who was it that created this doctrine?*

Something To Ponder

We now know that there are two types of Christians. There is the purported Christian, the so-called carnal one, who walks after the flesh and appears to be governed by the law of sin and death. And then, there is the Christian, that believer who walks not after the flesh but after the spirit and appears to be governed by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And with all that we had discovered, there still appears to be more to this being saved thing than we might have first thought when we started this journey.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (as sons) by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (Ephesians 1:3-5).

Many believe that long before God made the world, he predestined some whom he, at that moment, chose to participate in his plan of salvation. They believe that God handpicked those that he would appoint to become his sons by adoption. They also believe that through God's kindness and through the pleasure of his will, he has made them, those he predestined, holy in his eyes and without fault. They believe that his unchanging plan has been all along to adopt them into his family by sending Jesus to die for them. And they believe that through what Christ had done that they would stand before God covered with his love. This ideology gets into the theory of predestination, where God has pre-selected those for whom eternal damnation awaits and those for whom eternal salvation awaits. Once again, we know this is not true because salvation is a free gift that is available to all and is given freely to whosoever will accept it. God has neither chosen, picked out, appointed, selected, or elected any specific person or group for salvation and eternal life or for eternal damnation, since salvation and eternal life are free gifts offered to all (*John 3:16-17*).

They say that many are called or invited, but few are chosen (*Matthew 22:14*). But again, we know that this is not true because we know that God has neither chosen, picked out, appointed,

selected, or elected any specific person or group for salvation and eternal life or for eternal damnation. We also know this is not true because God has told us that there is no iniquity with the Lord and that he is not a respecter of person (*II Chronicles 19:7; Romans 2:11*). This means that no one individual is more important than any other individual is when it comes to God. This means that no one individual is treated better than any other individual is when it comes to God. We are all the same in God's eyes and he treats us all the same. Contrary to popular belief and contrary to what and how things appear to be, this is how it has been since the beginning of mankind and it has held true for every man that has ever walked the earth and that will ever walk the earth. This means that God is fair to all, treating all the same. We know this to be true because God has said in his word that *he changes not (Malachi 3:6)*. This means that whatever God has said since the beginning of mankind and whatever God has done since the beginning of mankind has not changed because he has said in his word that he changes not. This means that whatever God has said and whatever God has done carries on into the future for mankind because God will not change what he has said and what he has done. And we can say this with the greatest of confidence because we know it to be so. We know this to be so because God has said in his word that it is impossible for God to be untrue to himself (*II Timothy 2:13*) and it is impossible for God to lie, for *he cannot lie (Titus 1:2)*.

So, what is this passage really talking about? When we go to the beginning of the chapter, we see that Jesus is relating the kingdom of heaven to a certain king, who had made a wedding feast for his son. He had invited numerous people to come celebrate in the feast, at no cost to them, but many who heard the invitation refused to come. And so, he invited anybody else he could find to come, at no cost to them, and unlike the first, they came, both good and bad alike, to partake of the king's kindness. And when the king came to greet the guest, he noticed that one of them had defied his command to put on the guest robe and so the king had the defiant man cast into the darkness. But the question for us to answer is how does this story relate to the kingdom of heaven? From this we see that the king's invitation was open to everyone but some refused the invitation, representing the unbeliever or nonbeliever. Then there were those who attended the feast, both good and bad alike, representing those who accepted the free gift of salvation, whether they be them who walked after the flesh or them who walked after the spirit. And then there was the one who was cast into the darkness, where there was weeping and

gnashing of teeth because he defied the king by refusing to put on the guest robe for the celebration. So, here is a little something for you to ponder. Who do you believe the man, who accepted the invitation, but entered into the wedding feast without following the instruction of the king by putting on the guest robe and later was cast into the darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth, represents? It is possible that your answer is the answer to that long-standing controversial philosophy, which has plagued Christianity throughout the years.

Anyone who has ears to hear let him hear. For there are those that have heard the invitation and have completely rejected it and then there are those who have accepted the invitation. And among those who have accepted the invitation, there are those who walk after the flesh and there are those who walk after the spirit. And for those who have accepted the invitation that walk after the flesh, there appears to be condemnation awaiting them. But for those who have accepted the invitation that walk after the spirit, there appears to be no condemnation awaiting them. For the scriptures say that many have been called but there are a few who will actually get the message because only they have ears to hear, so they hear.

In many ways, we have been led away from the simplicity that is in Christ. The apostles preached a message that was pure, one of truth, one given by revelation of him who is truth. They entrusted themselves to the approval of man's sense of right and wrong in the sight of God. We are so confused, so influenced by Satan that we have lost that sense of right and wrong in the sight of God. But do not take my word for it. Just look around in the world today. Churches are rewriting their own church doctrines, questioning their faith, changing their interpretations, reexamining their teachings, creating new precepts, and arguing over the Word of God. Institutions are splitting because of differences in beliefs, opinions, principles, and theologies. However, just as Satan in the Garden of Eden deceived Eve, we continue to allow him to deceive us. We refuse to take control of our thoughts, control of our minds so that we can take the blinders off so that we can see the light which shines in our hearts that gives way to the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. Are you one who is deceived, confused, and influenced by Satan or are you one who has been enlightened? Just a little something for you to ponder.

In Conclusion

I trust that we have gotten everyone on the same page, speaking the same language, using the same terminology, and talking about the same things. I trust that we have eliminated as much confusion as possible so that there be no miscommunication, misinterpretation, or misunderstanding on anyone's behalf. I trust that we have ascertained what salvation is and how one may obtain it. And I trust that we have established that there is a difference in salvation, which is something that is obtained, and being saved, which is something that you are. We discussed the two schools of thought and have examined the more popular supportive passages used by each school to support their views on the doctrine that teaches *once saved always saved*. With all of this, we have yet to find a definitive answer to that long-standing controversial philosophy, which has plagued Christianity throughout the years, when we asked, *Is it possible for a Christian to lose his or her salvation once he or she has received it?*

We have discovered that there was speculation on both sides of this controversy, but that did not mean the speculation added to or took away from salvation as we have defined it. This also did not mean that the speculation added to or took away from the instructions that God has given us to follow. And this did not mean that any of the speculation played a major role in determining whether we are saved or not. These things are just that, speculations. I guess it would be safe to say those speculations were just someone's opinion, which appears to be based on incomplete information and some misinterpretations. We have seen some of what each side had as proof text for their positions, documenting some of the more popular ones. We have discovered that those things used to support their positions are the things that we as someone who has obtained the free gift of salvation and who is saved, would do naturally because we have elected to walk after the spirit and not after the flesh. And it is because we naturally believe, than we naturally do. And because we naturally do, than we naturally receive.

It is the Christian, who walks after the spirit, a recreated spirit, if you will, that is governed by the things of this recreated spirit. You know when your spirit has received the Word of God because you will do what it (*the word*) tells you to do (*John 6:63*). The mind of man is the battlefield, where the desires to do good war against the desires to do evil. Because the flesh

seeks to thwart the spirit, the outcome usually results in the man's inability to do the right things, as he should. This battle leaves the impression that the believer is caught in a hopeless tug-of-war between the spirit and the flesh, where the flesh appears to have the upper hand. But this is not the case. The believer is the one who decides by whom he will be led; either by his spirit or by his flesh. When yielding to the Spirit, the spiritual Christian is led (*voluntary submission*) by his spirit to turn away from his flesh's evil yearnings, thus putting sin out of his daily life. The spirit-led person is not under the law because the Spirit governs his moral life. By contrasting the fruit of the spirit (*Galatians 5:22-23*) with works of the flesh (*Galatians 5:19-21*), the believer can know whether he is walking by the spirit or being controlled by the flesh, which appears to be in line with our earlier discussion about the type of fruit each tree would produce.

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil (bad) fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them (Matthew 7:15-20).

The believer whose life is characterized by sin and vices, walks after the flesh and will not come into the kingdom of God because *a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit*. And because the believer, this corrupt tree, walks after the flesh, bringing forth evil fruit or not good fruit, then there is now therefore condemnation that awaits him or her. According to the scriptures, *every tree that brings not forth good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire*. Only the believer, that good tree, which walks after the spirit, bringing forth good fruit can come into the kingdom of God because there is now therefore no condemnation that awaits him or her. All the works of the flesh come into existence from out of the heart of man and all of the evil things come from within to defile man. Controlling your flesh is done through the renewing of your mind, for this is the battlefield where all things evil war against all things good.

For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies, the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world (Ephesians 6:12 – TLB).

When you fail to renew your mind, you allow those things that are not that good will of God to enter into your mind. When you fail to renew your mind, you allow those things that are not that acceptable will of God to enter into your mind. And when you fail to renew your mind, you allow those things that are not that perfect will of God to enter into your mind. When you allow those things that are not the will of God to enter into your mind, then the results reveal themselves in the uncontrolled actions of your flesh. You cannot do evil without thinking; therefore, you must renew your mind daily in order to stay in control.

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 (Romans 12:2).

God tells us not to copy the behavior and customs of this world. He tells us love not this evil world and all that it has to offer because when you love these things you show the Father that you have no love in your heart for him (*1 John 2:15*). God tells us to put away our former lives that were full of lust and shame. God tells us to put off that old evil nature which was leading us down that road to destruction. He tells us to instead be renewed in the spirit of our mind by putting on the new man, the new man, who is modeled after God and is created in righteousness and true holiness (*Ephesians 4:21-22*). And by putting on this new man and renewing our minds daily, we give no place or no opportunity to the devil (*Ephesians 4:27*).

Understand that Satan has infiltrated the body of Christ and has divided the kingdom. He has entered the organization and has become part of it so much so that he is hard to recognize. That one we believe to be him in disguise is usually not him but that one we believe to be a member of the body is actually him in disguise. We have allowed him to get close to us and close to our hearts. We have allowed him to come into our family and become a part of it. We have allowed him into our house and have set a place at our table for him. We have allowed him to influence whom we talk to, what we think of, what we say, what we believe in, and much, much more. We have allowed Satan in because he boasts that he is doing God's work in just the same way we are. We have allowed him to convince us that God has sent him. We have allowed him to persuade us that he is Christ's apostle. We have allowed him to blind us to the truth that God

never actually sent him at all. He is a phony who has fooled us in so many ways. And it should not be a surprise because the Scriptures say that he can transform himself into an angle of light. It also says that his servants can also be transformed to appear like godly ministers (*II Corinthians 11:14-15*). And so God warns us to be careful of those false Christs and false prophets.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (Matthew 24:24).

He tells us that these false Christs and these false prophets will show the world great signs and great wonders. He tells us that these false Christs and these false prophets will be so convincing with these great signs and great wonders that, if it were possible, they would deceive that very elect. Now this is a very scary thought. To think that these false Christs and these false prophets with their great signs and wonders would be able to, if it were possible, deceive the very elect. The scariest part of all of this is the fact that since it is not possible to deceive that very elect, then all who are not the very elect will be deceived by this show of great signs and great wonders from these false Christs and these false prophets. But who are these very elect individuals that could be deceived, if it were possible, by these great signs and wonders?

According to the Encarta Dictionary, *the elect* is defined as ***chosen by God, chosen by his divine will for salvation.*** According to Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, *the elect* is defined as ***persons belonging to a specially privileged group or those chosen by God for salvation and eternal life.*** We know these definitions do not apply because salvation is a free gift that is available to all and is given freely to whosoever will accept it. And we know that God has neither chosen, picked out, appointed, selected, or elected any specific person or group for salvation and eternal life or for eternal damnation. Now according to one definition found in the Strong's Complete Greek and Hebrew Lexicon, the elect are ***the choice, the select, as in the best of its kind and class, excellence preeminent; which is applied to certain individual Christians.*** Before you decide which definition is more suited for you, know that whichever one you select, the elect will be those Christians, who at the top of their game. They will be them

who are able to stand against the schemes, strategies, tactics, and tricks of the devil. They will be them who are able to extinguish the fiery darts of the wicked. They will be them who will be able to withstand in the evil day, having done all, to remain standing and be victorious (*Ephesians 6:10-17*).

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment (garments); and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city (Revelation 3:5; 2:7; 22:2; 22:14).

And for anyone who has ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Churches, let him hear. To all who have overcome, that is, you who have held fast to your faith against the powers of the darkness and conquered the temptations that you have faced; to you will God give the privilege to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God, better known as the Garden of Eden. To all who have overcome, you have fought the good fight of faith. To all who have overcome, you have obtained salvation because you have confessed with your mouth what you have believed in your heart in the sight of many witnesses. To all who have overcome, you have believed in your heart that God has raised him from the dead and you have confessed with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, for it is with your heart that you believe unto righteousness and it with your mouth that your confession is made unto salvation. To all who have overcome, you have held tightly to the eternal life that has been given to you through the sacrificial act of Christ Jesus; for blessed are you who has washed your robe clean for you shall be clothed in white raiment. To all who have overcome, you have earned the right to enter into the gate of the city and to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, that you may live forever. And because you have overcome, your name will not be blotted out of the book of life, but your name will be confessed before the Father and angels.

And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect (chosen ones) from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Matthew 24:31).

Will you be one that that angels gather together from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other? God wants the best for all of his children just as we would want for our children, for those of us that have them. I have to ask, *Is there anything within the limits of the law that you would not do for or give to your child?* I do not believe so. God is the same; he wants the best for his children. But let me say this so that there be no misunderstandings about God's children. Please know that everyone is a creation of God, but not everyone is a child of God. You have to be adopted into the family and God has given us definite and unqualified instructions to follow that will allow us to enter into his family. I heard it said that God does not offer suggestions or alternatives for us to follow but gives us his best, which will always result in the best possible outcome. Even though there appears to be many possible solutions available, there is only one that will result in God's best for his children. In order to get the best that God has to offer, you have to follow the instructions or rules that he has established in his manual. Much like any sport that you may play, you have to play by the rules of the game in order to emerge victorious. You cannot play a baseball with football rules and expect to win the baseball game. This same principle applies to the things of God. You have to follow the instruction manual exactly to get the best that God has to offer. Salvation works the same way.

God has given us specific instructions to follow so that we may obtain this free gift of salvation. But because many lack revelation knowledge, we have created an environment for deception and destruction to run without restraints, keeping us in captivity. Although everyone has the opportunity to obtain this free gift of salvation, not everyone will take advantage of the opportunity. God has made salvation available to all by the sacrificial act of Jesus, but to obtain this free gift, we are required to follow specific instructions in order to receive the benefits.

The bottom line is, salvation is a free gift, something that is given to you that does not cost you anything; something that is given to you that is free of charge. We have discovered that

salvation is a gift that has been secured by the sacrifice of Jesus when he died on the cross. It is a gift that is available to every man, woman, and child, which can be obtained only by believing in one's heart and then confessing those beliefs with one's mouth. Once completed, the free gift is delivered. So is it possible to lose the free gift of salvation once you have obtained it? This is one of those things that you will need to decide for yourself. You will have to decide if it is possible for a person to lose a gift that they chose to accept. Just know that with any gift that you choose to accept, it is also your choice to refuse such a gift. This is not something that you lose in the sense that God will take the gift from you, because his gifts are without repentance and the callings of God are irrevocable (**Romans 11:29**), but that does not mean that you cannot give the free gift back.

And so, it would stand to reason that if you could chose to accept the gift, then it would be your choice as to whether you kept the free gift or gave it back. There is no one or no one thing, entities included, that can determine whether you get salvation or whether you give it back. That choice is and will always be yours to make. Just remember, salvation is something that is obtained; saved is something that you are. I trust that you will make the right choice. Remember, God wants you to operate in revelation knowledge. God wants you to obtain the free gift of salvation. God wants you to be saved.

After all, salvation is not given to those who know what to do, unless they do it (Romans 2:15).

The choice to keep the gift is yours as well as the choice to give it back. Just know that God has given specific instructions for you should you decide to give back the gift.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world (age) to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh (again), and put him to an open shame (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Once you have been enlightened, understanding the Good News, tasting for yourself the sweetness of the heavenly gift, sharing with the Holy Spirit, realizing just how good the Word of God is, and feeling the mighty powers of the world to come, by turning against God, it is not possible for your heart to be renewed a second time. Because you have fallen away, you have rejected Christ, crucified him by nailing him to the cross again, and made a spectacle of his sacrifice on the cross.

But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name (John 20:31).

Do you believe that the trivial things, those minor misinterpretations of the Scripture that some believe warrant no attention, could prevent you from finding the truth? The truth is that they can. All things are important, no matter how trivial they appeared to be. It is so important to pay attention to those things that many believe warrant no attention, because it from those trivial things that you might gain wisdom and understanding. In the above passage, you are told that there are certain things recorded in this book (*the Bible*) so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. You are also told that it is the believing that Jesus is the Christ that gives you the opportunity to have life through his name. You know that the free gift of salvation is obtained by confessing with your mouth that which you believe in your heart about Jesus the Christ. And even though the gift of salvation is free, given to all who have followed the instructions on how to obtain it; it is still a gift, something that can be accepted or something that can be rejected. It is however, not something that you can technically lose, in the sense that it can be take away, but it is something that can be thrown away.

Regardless of what is written between the covers of this compilation, the bottom line is, you will have to make a choice. You will have to decide if the doctrine that teaches ***once saved always saved*** is of God or of man. As with anything that has come from God, the choice is and will always be all yours. Therefore, choose wisely.

I trust this compilation, *Once Saved Always Saved* has ministered to you, added to your understanding, and that you have been the better for have read it. It is not my intent to question any religious beliefs nor is this an attempt to convert anyone to a certain religious belief or religion. I only seek illumination of the scriptures and offer the same with that which has been revealed to me. Regardless of what may be included in a devotional or a comment that I may include, open up your Bible and check it out for yourself. Words can be manipulated to say many things, make sure the ones that you accept are in line with the truth. I welcome your comments and questions. As you seek the truth, know that the revelation will come if you believe. If this message has been a blessing to you, and you have found it to be useful aid, please feel free to include it in your studies and to share this message with others so that it can be a blessing to them as well. Keep in mind that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God and are given to tell you what to believe, what is wrong, how to correct wrong, and how to live. They are a treasure of knowledge and understanding, showing how to distinguish right from wrong and how to find the right decisions. For the Lord grants wisdom and from it comes the knowledge and the understanding of righteousness, judgment, and equity. The conditions for obtaining wisdom are very simple; you must earnestly seek it. Once wisdom, truth, and understanding enter the very center of your being, discretion will preserve you, understanding will keep you, and joy will fill your life. Truth is limited to the width of your belief and the depth of your desire, receiving only that which you believe, according to your faith. Therefore, escape your confines to diligently search the mystery unlocked from within, continually refreshing reason, and striving to properly separate truth-absolute. Remember to stay in the Word, tending to it daily that you may enjoy your blessings and your covenant promises, all to the glory of the Father, all for the work of the kingdom, and all to establish his covenant, all in the name of Jesus. . . .

Enjoy your blessings for they are many,

Your Brother in Christ.

Understanding this Compilation

This is a compilation of materials gathered from various sources composed together to define and to illustrate the ideas and thoughts contained within. In an effort to uncover the secrets of the Bible while researching and compiling the materials for this project, every effort has been made to acknowledge any written word, spoken word, thought, or idea from an author, speaker, teacher, or church leader that has expressly contributed to the completion of this project. It is not the intention of this author to accept or take credit for, nor to infringe on any copyrighted material or the thoughts and ideas of others but to compile existing information into one unified thought and to record these thoughts on paper in a manner that will contribute to the growth of its reader. This compilation is not intended to criticize or question any religious beliefs or religions nor is it an attempt to convert anyone to a certain religious belief or religion. It is however, intended to necessitate thought from and verification to those who receive it, to share those uncommon revelations that exist in the Word of God, to aid in studying and rightly dividing the word of truth, and to be a useful tool for those who have an ear to hear.

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Contact information:



The Sign Of The Times Publications
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Kingdom Worker Ministries
George A. Evans
Christiansburg, VA
Email: GEvans77@aol.com

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