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Salvation



Individual Topics - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg's "Salvation" delves into the concept of salvation in the Christian faith, highlighting its spiritual nature and its three aspects: justification, sanctification, and glorification. He emphasizes that salvation is not earned through human effort but is received by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Gregg stresses the importance of maintaining faith and committing to obedience to Christ, as rejecting Christ's Lordship or choosing not to follow him can potentially lead to a loss of salvation. The lecture concludes by emphasizing that holding steadfastly to faith in Jesus Christ is a voluntary act of commitment.

Transcript

Salvation, of course, is the state of being saved, and therefore it's a very commonly spoken of term among Christians. In fact, it's such a common term that sometimes we might even take it for granted. We might ask somebody if they're saved without really knowing in our own minds what that question means.

Of course, to us that means, are you one of us? Are you a Christian? Are you maybe in fellowship? Or have you said the sinner's prayer? Or, you know, are you born again? And to us, the word saved may call to mind any of these things. But really, if you ask somebody if they were saved, and they said, saved from what? Would you know how to answer that properly and biblically? Some, I'm sure, would, and maybe some of you wouldn't. And what if somebody said, I don't really know what I need to be saved from, or I don't need to be saved.

What do you mean saved? You know, a lot of times we'll use terminology that becomes a Christian cliché to us, but which has no concrete meaning or definition in our minds. And yet, it's obviously an extremely valuable concept, salvation. Not only is it a concept, our life depends on it as Christians.

And so, an understanding of what the Bible teaches about salvation will benefit us. Now, you might say, but I'm already saved, I don't need to hear this. As a matter of fact, everybody needs to know this material, I think.

And it may be that some of you already know it, and so you're doing fine. But if you don't know some of these things, then it will profit you to know it, no matter how saved you are, or how long you've been in that condition. Because you need to understand what the nature of the salvation is that Jesus has provided for us.

Now, the word salvation in the Scriptures is from the Greek word, *soteria*. If we put that into English characters, it reads like this. S-O-T-E-R-I-A.

Soteria. Theologians have a branch of theology that they call *soteriology*, which obviously is taken from this Greek word. *Soteriology* is the study of salvation.

And if you believe that salvation was by works, and I believe that salvation was by faith and through grace alone, we would have a different *soteriology* than each other. We would have a different concept and doctrine and theology of salvation. Now, I must say, you might think that anybody who doesn't have a correct concept of salvation probably isn't a Christian, and may be a cultist, or at least a heretic.

And yet we have to be careful about making such a generalization, because there can be people who are truly saved who have not fully understood what salvation is. As far as mentally, they haven't come to the... They don't know the Bible verses behind it to explain what salvation is. And they might not be able to tell you what salvation is, but it is possible to have experienced salvation through simply having come into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.

Nonetheless, it behooves us to know what it is that we're talking about, what the Bible says about this condition, and hopefully have an accurate and biblical *soteriology* of salvation. And it might surprise you to learn that there's a... In the body of Christ, among people that we would mostly recognize as Christians, and not as cultists or heretics, but as Christians, there are some different views, some very different views, on some of the aspects of salvation at least. So, I'd like to talk about that.

The word *soteria* in the Greek means literally deliverance from the hand of enemies. That's the... If you look it up in Thayer's *Lexicon* or in some other Greek source book, the first definition into the English that you'd get for *soteria* would be something along the lines of deliverance. Now, this can be a spiritual deliverance, or it can be a natural deliverance from natural enemies.

Soteria simply means being delivered, or liberated, or preserved, or it can mean safety. These ideas are all wrapped up in the word of *soteria*. And, of course, it means salvation.

That's how it's very commonly translated in our scriptures. But the concept of salvation and its counterpart in the Old Testament has a long history among God's people. God is known as a Savior even in the Old Testament.

A Savior is one who saves or who brings salvation, who brings his people into salvation.

In Isaiah chapter 43 and verse 11, I believe it is, God said, there is none beside me, and just God and his Savior. There's none other Savior besides me, essentially, is what he says.

So, God the Father, Jehovah, or whatever name we choose to give him, there are different biblical alternatives. Yet, he is the Savior, even in the Old Testament. He saved his people.

When you read the Psalms, you see a great emphasis on the concept of salvation. Psalm 27.1, the Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? In the Old Testament, when this term salvation is used, and God is seen as the Savior, and the psalmist and the prophet rejoice in the salvation of God, and the prophet Isaiah chapter 60 and verse 18 says, you should call your walls salvation, and your gates should be called praise.

What is this salvation of which they speak? It is apparent that the Old Testament writers did not have the same concept of salvation as the New Testament writers. And Peter explains why that is in 1 Peter chapter 1. In 1 Peter chapter 1, it says concerning our relationship with Christ, beginning at verse 8 and reading through verse 12, Whom, having not seen, ye love. That is, we haven't seen Jesus yet, but we love him anyway.

In whom, though now ye see him not, yet, believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, or the goal, the end result of your faith, namely, the salvation of your souls. Salvation of your souls. This is a spiritual kind of salvation as opposed to a physical deliverance.

But notice what it says in the next verses. Verse 10. Of which salvation the prophets, meaning the Old Testament writers, have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when he testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Unto whom, that is, unto the Old Testament writers, it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things also the angels desire to look into. And that last verse in particular is a lengthy sentence with a lot of subordinate clauses, and it is hard to follow the thought, perhaps. I thought this sentence through long ago, so I can sort of summarize it for you.

Maybe you were able to understand it, but let me try to put that into very simple terms. Basically, he says, we are receiving by loving Jesus whom we have not seen, and by trusting in him whom we have not seen, we are receiving the salvation of our souls. And he says, this salvation was spoken of even in the Old Testament.

However, the prophets who spoke of it recognized that there was something more to it than they were grasping, and they diligently sought to know and to understand the nature of this salvation of which they spoke. But the Holy Spirit revealed to them that it was not for them to know. It was not for them to fully understand the salvation of which they were speaking, because it was not for their generation to come into this experience exactly in the same way as it is now our privilege to do, who have had the gospel preached unto us through the same Holy Ghost.

In other words, the nature of salvation which we experienced was not understood fully, and was deliberately withheld from being understood by the Old Testament prophets. Now, that means that we are going to read of salvation in the Old Testament from time to time, and as we read, we realize the prophets were speaking about our salvation in Christ, but they didn't necessarily know it or understand it. In many cases in the Old Testament, it would appear that what the prophet or the writer of the Old Testament is saying about salvation refers only to physical deliverance.

In fact, even the verse we mentioned in Psalm 27.1, The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear, clearly suggests that David is thinking of God as his deliverer from physical enemies, human beings. Who will I fear when I have God for my deliverance, for my salvation? And this is generally the way the Old Testament writers thought when they used the term salvation. But when we read those passages, we have the fuller light, which is given to us in the New Testament, which reveals that the salvation is a salvation of our souls.

And it is exactly this salvation of which those Old Testament writers were speaking, but they didn't understand everything they were saying. I'm sure that what they said had perfect application to their circumstances on a natural level, but it had a secondary meaning which only the Holy Spirit could reveal and did to the apostles of the New Testament era. That this was God is a savior in more than the physical sense.

He does not only deliver us from our physical dangers and enemies and preserve us in our physical lives. He saves us in another sense, which is a spiritual sense. The Jews, when they first were delivered out of Egypt in the Exodus, and in the book of Exodus chapter 14, verse 13, this word salvation came to be applied to them in a very specific and important sense.

When the Egyptians were pursuing the children of Israel to the point where the Israelites were hemmed in, there was a mountain range on one side and there was a vast wilderness on another side, and then right in front of them was the Red Sea and right behind them was the Egyptian army pressing in. There was nowhere for them to go and they complained to Moses and said, because there were not enough graves in Egypt, have you brought us out here to perish in the wilderness? Can't you just imagine a New York Jew saying something along those lines? That's such a Jewish kind of expression,

isn't it? Because there were no graves in Egypt, did you bring us out here to die in the wilderness so we could be buried out here? And Moses said, essentially, be quiet. He said, be still.

And he said, stand still and see the salvation of our God. And with that, he reached his staff over the waters and as you know the story, the waters parted and the Jews were able to pass through on dry land. When they were successfully and safely across on the other side of the Red Sea and they had seen the Egyptians who tried to pursue them drowned in the Red Sea behind them, they sang a song which was a song of salvation.

And Miriam took the tambourine and Moses let out in a song. The song is recorded in the first part of Exodus chapter 15 and I'd like you to just look at the wording of that song. Exodus chapter 15.

Then sang Moses, this is verse one, and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord. And Spake saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The Lord is my strength and song and he is become my salvation. And so forth. Now, it says here when the Jews came through the Red Sea, they say the Lord is my strength, he is my song and now he is also become my salvation, my deliverance.

What were they speaking of? Very obviously, they were speaking of their deliverance from the Egyptians as they passed through the Red Sea. They said the horse and the rider hath he thrown into the sea, now he is become my salvation. Clearly to the Jew, salvation was in natural terms.

God was their salvation because he delivered them from their bondage. He delivered them from their enemies. He delivered them from their oppressors.

And it's interesting that even this song, even this Exodus experience foreshadowed his future spiritual salvation. Though the Jews knew it only in terms of a physical salvation, yet it prefigured a spiritual salvation. We know this because of some things the Apostle Paul said about that.

You know, it was through the offering of the Passover lamb and the spreading of the blood on the doorpost that the Jews were spared. And the judgment came on the Egyptians which led to the release of the Jews through the Red Sea. And Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 says, Christ our Passover is slain for us.

Implying that what the Passover did for the people in Egypt, so Jesus has done spiritually speaking for us. In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul says, you know that how all of our fathers were passed through the sea. And all of them were baptized into Moses in the sea and in the cloud.

In other words, passing through the sea was a type and a figure of Christian baptism. And if you read that in 1 Corinthians 10, you can't miss that point. He points out all these things that happened to the Jews beginning with the Exodus and following.

And he says, these things in verse 6 of 1 Corinthians 10, these things happened to them as types, he said. Examples, but in the Greek it's types for us. So, the Jews escaping from Egypt was a type of our salvation.

To them it was a natural deliverance, to us it speaks of a spiritual deliverance. And that's why Jesus inaugurated the Last Supper on the Passover celebration night with his disciples. You know that the Jews ever since the Exodus would meet together as a family, generally speaking, in their homes once a year at Passover time.

And they would again eat lamb, as their ancestors had done on the night of the first Passover. They would again eat unleavened bread. And there was a ceremony through which they went, which involved the ceremonial and symbolic eating of bread and drinking from a cup of wine.

And as they would eat the crust of bread, the matzos, as they called it, they would commemorate the fact that a lamb in Egypt had been slain and its blood had been put over the doorpost and they had eaten its body. And as they ate the cracker, they were symbolically reliving the eating of that lamb by their ancestors in Egypt. And as the cup came around and they took their drink from that, that wine represented the blood of the lamb that in Egypt had been slain for their deliverance and their salvation from that nation.

Now, Jesus took this Passover apparently at least two or three times with his disciples. And on the last time, it was the night that he was betrayed. And it was the Passover season.

All the Jews were preparing to take the Passover meal in the same manner as they had done for centuries. And Jesus sat with his disciples in the upper room and the disciples expected an ordinary Passover meal. They celebrated Passover from their youth with their families and probably the past few years with Jesus each year.

And so, they were familiar with the traditional Passover. But this time, something was different. When Jesus gathered with them in the upper room, he said, With great desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

This Passover is different. There's something very different, he implied, about this one. And after they had taken the meal and it was time for that ceremony of eating the bread and drinking the wine, he took that matzos, which had traditionally represented the body of the lamb that was slain in Egypt, that was eaten by their ancestors to give them strength to escape from Egypt.

And he took that matzos and instead of pronouncing that this represents the lamb in Egypt, as they had traditionally done year after year, he said, This bread is my body, which is broken for you. And when it was time to take the cup, instead of going through the regular ritual of pronouncing that this cup represents the blood of the paschal lamb, which was shed in Egypt in the days of the original Passover, as they had commonly done, he said, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins. In other words, he took the whole meaning of Passover and applied it to something totally new and different.

It always commemorated a salvation to which the Jews had looked as the founding, the birth of their nation was at the Exodus. And that was when the new covenant was made, because as soon as they came out of Egypt, God took them to Sinai and entered into covenant with them. So the first covenant and the first salvation that God had had with his people was through the Passover, through the Exodus.

And the Jews looked to that as the initial saving experience and birthing experience of their nation and the entering into covenant with God. And Jesus took the ceremony, which was annually celebrated by the Jews and reapplied all of its symbols and said this from now on, whenever you do this, you do it to remember me. Egypt is no longer significant.

You've had a greater salvation through me. My blood, my body is broken and shed to bring a different and a higher, a spiritual kind of salvation to you. So that the salvation concept of the Old Testament took on a spiritual mode at the Last Supper.

And the disciples forever after never took the Passover meal in the same way again, because he said they shouldn't. He said as often as you take this. Now, he didn't say how often it was, but the Jews traditionally took it yearly and probably the disciples did so more often than that.

In fact, we know in the book of Acts, they did it weekly in some cases. But he said as often as you do it, you do it to remember me. You don't do it to remember Egypt anymore.

You do it to remember me. In fact, there in Isaiah, the prophet, there was a prophecy that was talking about salvation, about New Testament salvation, though the prophet Isaiah would not have understood it, nor would have the Jews, the rabbis would have understood it simply because it was veiled. It was a mystery.

But when we read it today, it talks about a salvation that God would bring to his people. And he says, after that, they won't remember the salvation from Egypt anymore. He says they won't remember that anymore because it will essentially be eclipsed by this new salvation.

And so it's true. Today, when we take communion, we do not commemorate anything that has to do with the Jews' deliverance from Egypt. We have a new salvation that we experience.

To us, salvation is a spiritual experience. Now, this concept did not come readily to the Jewish mind when Jesus first arrived. Remember, Jesus came and he had this new kind of salvation to inaugurate and to offer.

But he came to a Jewish society that was saturated with this Old Testament thought of salvation. Now, throughout the Old Testament, prophecies had been made about the Messiah who would come, about the kingdom he would bring in, and of the salvation that he would give to his people. But the Jews always thought of salvation as a political sort of a thing, political deliverance from political enemies.

And at the time that Jesus came, it just so happened the Jews were in bondage to another political power, the Romans. And Jerusalem and the whole of Palestine was occupied by Roman armies. And therefore, the Jews chafed not quite as badly as they had under Egypt, because the Romans were much more merciful to them than the Egyptians had been.

Nonetheless, the Jews always chafed whenever they were under pagan Gentile control. They always wanted their independence, and so they looked for the Messiah to come and deliver them, bring salvation. The prophets had said that the Messiah would bring in salvation to his people, and so they longed for the Messiah.

And when there was a suspicion that the Messiah was coming, because there were many prophecies that pointed to that particular period, and many Jews believed the Messiah was coming. Remember Simeon in the temple? Before Jesus was ever born, the Holy Spirit spoke to him and said, You're not going to die before you see the Lord's Christ. And when he saw Jesus, what did he say? Lord, let not thy servant depart in peace.

Why? Because mine eyes have seen your salvation. He recognized Jesus was this one who would bring this salvation. But no doubt, Simeon didn't have the New Testament idea of it, and it doesn't matter whether he did or not.

He died probably shortly thereafter, and never lived to see the new covenant come in. Yet, he recognized, because the Holy Spirit had told him, the time is near, the time is near. You're not going to die before the Messiah comes.

He saw salvation. And most of the Jews, even who recognized Jesus as the Savior, as the Messiah, thought of him in political terms. This is no doubt why the zealot Simon, Zelotes, was attracted to Jesus and became one of the disciples.

We can't be certain. Nothing really is told us in the Bible about his motives. But the zealots were a political party that resisted the Romans and wanted to oust them by

force.

And we know there was at least one of these zealots from this party in the band of disciples with Jesus. And it may have been the suspicion that Jesus was the Messiah and that he would oust the Romans that attracted Simon, Zelotes, originally to Jesus. And even, you know, to the end, the disciples wondered whether Jesus was going to oust the Romans, because they saw him as the Savior and they thought of salvation only in political, physical terms, from political enemies.

And you remember John the Baptist had the same problem. John the Baptist was put in prison. He needed salvation.

He needed deliverance. He was in prison. He needed to be set free.

He needed liberation. He needed salvation in that Old Testament sense of the word, as far as he was concerned. He publicly testified that Jesus was the Savior.

But as he languished in prison, he would receive reports from outsiders constantly about what Jesus was doing. And nothing Jesus was doing was moving in the direction of overthrowing the Romans. Jesus was just moving about, teaching people in a gentle manner.

He would rebuke the Pharisees, but he never was known to rebuke a Roman. He didn't seem to be doing the things that Messiah was supposed to do. Wasn't Jesus concerned about the salvation of his people? And remember, John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus and said, Are you the one who was to come, or should we look for another one? Now that stumbled some people, that John the Baptist would have any doubts.

John the Baptist was a man. He wasn't a superman. He was a man, a prophet.

He was filled with the Holy Spirit. But I would dare say even sometimes spiritual Christians have a question mark arise in their head about Jesus once in a while. And in John the Baptist's sense, he expected Jesus, whom he knew to be the Messiah, to behave differently.

But Jesus was not pursuing the kind of salvation for his people that they expected. But that shouldn't have surprised them, because early on, before Jesus even was born, the kind of salvation that he would bring was announced by an angel. Now, of course, not everyone had an opportunity to hear that angel.

But those who did should have had an understanding of the kind of salvation Jesus would bring. In Matthew chapter 1, before Jesus was born, while Mary was yet pregnant, and Joseph, her fiancé, was considering whether he ought to put her away privately and not disgrace her for it, because he knew that the child wasn't his. And he thought perhaps she, well, he just had to assume that she had been promiscuous.

While he was considering what to do in this matter, the angel, Gabriel, came to Joseph and spoke to him about this situation and said to him in Matthew chapter 1 and verse 21, the angel said, And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Not from the Romans. That's not the salvation he was going to bring.

He will save his people from their sins. That's the worst oppressors they have to deal with. The only reason the Jews ever came under political oppression was because they first were oppressed by their own sinful nature.

The only reason the Jews ever went into Babylon as slaves is because they were stuck on a pattern of sin that they couldn't break free from. They were slaves of sin. And it was not political deliverance that they most desperately needed.

It was deliverance, salvation from the power of their own sinful nature. And the angel announced, his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from that. That's the salvation he would bring.

It's a spiritual thing. It's not a political thing. The name Jesus, which is here announced in connection with his mission to save his people from their sins, the name Jesus actually is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua.

Joshua is just the Hebrew form of the same name. Both names have the same meaning. Joshua, which is the original, or Yeshua as the Jews would have pronounced it, comes from two words, Jehovah or Yeshua, which is of course the name for God.

Shua, Shua meaning is salvation. Jehovah Shua, or Yeshua if it's abbreviated, or Joshua, depending on how you pronounce the first letter. Joshua or Yeshua means Jehovah Shua, which means Jehovah is salvation.

That's the meaning of the name Joshua. Jehovah is salvation. Jesus is nothing other than the Greek form of the same name.

Jesus in Greek means the same thing. Jehovah is salvation. So, when the angel announced that his name should be called Jesus, which means Jehovah is salvation, it's not surprising that he would connect it with the saving mission that Jesus would have.

His name will be called Jesus because he'll save his people from their sins. And so the salvation that Jesus would bring is spiritual, not political or physical. Look at Luke chapter 4. Jesus announced this himself in an early sermon of his.

Luke chapter 4. While you're turning there, I'm going to read a passage from Isaiah 61. In Isaiah 61.1, the prophet Isaiah said this, The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of

prison to them that are bound.

Now, he says, Isaiah says, the Lord has anointed me to preach this message. It is a message of liberty. It is a message of the opening of prisons.

In other words, in the Old Testament sense of the word, it's a message of salvation. Deliverance. Now, Jesus quoted this verse.

And as the Jews would read that verse, no doubt they would think of it in terms of a political deliverance. And if they happen to think of it in terms of a messianic verse that is about the Messiah, which I don't know whether they did or not, Jesus certainly applied it that way. But I don't know if the Jews applied it that way.

But if they did, they would have certainly seen it as a reference to the Messiah delivering them from their political enemies. But Jesus came to his own hometown in Nazareth and preached there. It was not very well received, as it turned out.

But it says in verse 16 of Luke chapter 4, and he came to Nazareth where he'd been brought up. And as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Don't be confused. The word Isaiah in your King James Version is the Greek form of the name Isaiah. Isaiah is Hebrew.

Isaiah is the Greek form. The book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written.

And this place is Isaiah 61.1, which I just read to you. And here's how it read. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance, or soteria, salvation, to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Now, he closed the book after that, and it says in verse 21, he said unto them, This day the scripture is fulfilled in your ears. In other words, the scripture speaks of someone proclaiming by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, proclaiming a message of salvation and deliverance.

He says, that has just happened as you've listened to me. I have just proclaimed that message by the spirit of the Lord. This scripture has been fulfilled right now as you've heard me say these words, in your hearing.

In other words, he is the anointed one preaching that message. But what kind of salvation? What kind of opening of eyes? Now, it's true Jesus opened physical eyes of blind people. But that was not the most significant recovery of sight that he accomplished.

After he healed a man who was blind from birth in John chapter 9, the blind man received a lot of flack from the religious authorities because this had happened on the Sabbath day. And people aren't supposed to get healed on the Sabbath day in their religion. And Jesus said at the end of this, he was talking to the blind man after he was healed, and the Pharisees were listening in, it said in verse 39 of John 9, John 9, 39, Jesus said, For judgment I am coming to this world that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.

And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words and said unto him, Are we blind also? And Jesus said unto them, If you were blind, you should have no sin. But now you say, we see, therefore your sin remaineth. Because if you really were blind, if you really were in spiritual ignorance altogether, you would be innocent of your crimes.

But you are not innocent. You claim to see, and therefore you're responsible for your actions. But notice, he said, I have come so that those who are blind will receive sight, and those who have sight will become blind.

Is he talking about physical sight? Now it's true the statement was made right after he'd opened the physical eyes of a blind man, but it's also clear that his statement is a spiritual lesson he's building out of this physical miracle he did. He says, essentially, I've come to open the eyes of blind people, spiritually speaking, and people who are spiritually think they can see, they're becoming more spiritually blind. Now, he proclaimed the opening of the eyes, or the recovering of sight to the blind, and the opening of the prisons, deliverance to the captives.

What kind of deliverance to the captives? He shall save his people from what? Their sins. The concept of people being captives of sin is the thing that was emphasized in Jesus' ministry throughout, and the salvation that he accomplishes for us is salvation from sin. Look with me at John chapter 8. John chapter 8, verses 31 through 34.

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, or liberate, or save you, deliver you. Now, they answered him, We are Abraham's seed, and we are never in bondage to any man. How sayest thou ye shall be made free? This shows the spirit of the Jew.

Always free in their own mind. But they were politically under bondage to men right then. He said, we are Abraham's seed.

We've never been in bondage to anyone. As though their nation had never been in bondage. They spent the first 400 years of their history in bondage to Egypt, and then another 70 years under Babylon, and a good number of their people had gone into permanent captivity in Assyria, and at this very moment, I mean in the past 400 years of their history, they've been under the Greeks, the Syrians, the Egyptians again, and now

the Romans.

How could they say we've never been in bondage to any man? They were the most in bondage people in history. But that's the pride of the Jew. He would not acknowledge it.

Outwardly I'm in bondage, but inwardly I'm fiercely independent. It's like the little kid who said, I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside when his mother made him sit down. That's how the Jews were, you know.

You say you're going to make us free? I take offense at that. You're suggesting we're not free. We've never been in bondage.

What are you talking about? And so Jesus explains himself in verse 34. Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever commits sin is the servant, or in the Greek, the slave of sin. So that's what he means.

If you follow my words and my commandments, you will know the truth, and that truth will set you free. From what? From sin. He came to set us free from captivity to sin.

If you look at Romans chapter 6. Romans 6, verses 17 and 18. Well, we'll start at verse 16. 16 through 18.

Romans 6, 16 through 18. Paul says, know ye not that to whom you yield yourselves, servants to obey his servants, or literally slaves, you are? To whom you obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. You yield yourself to sin, you become a slave of sin, resulting in death.

If you yield yourself to obedience, it'll result in righteousness. But God be thanked that you were once the slaves of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you, being then made free from sin. Ye became servants, or slaves of righteousness.

So we've just transferred masters. We were under slavery to sin, but Jesus has set us free. Whosoever serves sin, Jesus said, is the servant of sin.

Whoever commits sin is the slave of sin. Now Paul says, we have been set free from sin. That is clearly the basic element of our salvation.

Just one other verse that kind of points out that slavery to sin is what we need salvation from. Over in 2 Peter chapter 2. Talking about false prophets, false teachers who had come into the church. 2 Peter 2 and verse 19 says, concerning their teachings.

2 Peter 2, 19. While they promised them liberty, they themselves are the slaves of corruption. For of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought into bondage.

That is to say, if you are overcome by sin, you become in bondage to sin. These people,

these false teachers offer us a certain kind of liberty, freedom. But he says, they don't even know, they themselves are still slaves of sin.

They haven't been set free, they are not even saved. Because being saved in the biblical sense of the word, in the New Testament, is to be saved out of the bondage of sin. The bondage of the Jews in Egypt was a type and a shadow of our universal human condition of bondage to sin.

The deliverance of the Jews through the slain of the Passover lamb, and the passage through the water. In the crossing of the Red Sea at the Exodus. This was all a spiritual type of our deliverance from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ.

And then followed by baptism, passing through the water and so forth into a new life to be led by the Holy Spirit. Now all of that in the Old Testament typified this spiritual reality. So the salvation of Jesus is the salvation of our souls.

Spiritual salvation. And it is not salvation merely from hell, as many people would describe it. Many people think that salvation is just being saved from hell.

We are not just saved from hell. That would be only saved from the consequences of our sins. Now I would rather be saved from hell than not saved from anything.

But even if I were saved from hell, it would be little consolation to me if I had to live the rest of my life a total slave to sin. If I still had to sin as much as ever before. Is Jesus a savior from sin? Then why should I have to go on sinning? The very truth of the gospel is that we are saved from our sins and we don't have to go on sinning.

Now we do sin and we are not pretending otherwise. I am not going to stand here and tell you that I or anyone I know has ever reached a state of sinless perfection. But I will tell you there is a promise in the scripture in 1 Corinthians 10.13. 1 Corinthians 10.13 says, There hath no temptation taken you, but such is as common to man.

And God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond that which you are able to endure, but will let the temptation provide a means of escape that you may endure it. So that whenever I am tempted to sin, there is a way of escape. I usually don't take it and that's usually because I don't want to as much as I should want to.

Now sometimes I want to and a lot of times I wish I had afterwards. And as a Christian, I am a person who has a changed heart so that more often than before I do want to take the way of escape. I want to get out of my sins.

Sin is something I don't agree with anymore. But there are times under the pressure of temptation that there is a way of escape that I do not choose to take. That is because of the corruptness of my own nature.

Nonetheless, theoretically, I would never have to sin if I would take that way of escape every time. Because Jesus has truly provided an opening of the prisons. He has provided a way of escape from every individual temptation.

He has a savior for my sins. And while I have not come into, and I don't necessarily expect that in my lifetime I will come into the state where I don't sin anymore in any way, yet I have this promise. When I'm tempted right now, I don't have to sin as I once did.

Paul said, we are debtors no longer to the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. We're not debtors to that anymore. We don't owe sin anything.

We don't owe the flesh anything. What did it ever do for me? I now am free to walk out of its prison house and to not sin. And when I am facing any particular temptation, resistance and victory and total salvation out of that is one of the options available to me.

The other option, of course, is succumbing to it. It's not really a Christian option, but it's nonetheless one that human beings take very often, including myself. Unfortunately, not as often as before.

Thank you, Lord. But what I am saying is this, salvation from sin has been accomplished. There's not a temptation that you'll ever experience that you could not resist with the power and the grace of God if you would.

And therefore, we can have a salvation from our sins, and that is what we need more desperately than we need salvation from our political enemies. You know, it bothers some people how Paul dealt with the subject of slaves in the New Testament. Because Paul would often write to people who possessed slaves as well as people who were slaves.

In the Roman Empire, over half of the population of Rome were slaves. Therefore, when a cross-section of humanity in the Roman Empire would get saved, a large number of them were slaves, and another percentage were slave masters in the church. Now, we might think that Paul should immediately tell the slave masters, release your slaves.

Because to us, political liberty is the thing. There's a kind of theology now that's very popular among certain liberal groups called liberation theology, which teaches that the mission of the church is to establish social justice throughout the world by overthrowing corrupt and oppressive political systems and structures. So that the World Council of Churches and others of these ecumenical and liberation theological groups have actually sent thousands, or maybe even millions of dollars to certain revolutionary groups to help them physically overthrow governments that were oppressive.

And these kinds of people are moving more on sentiment than gospel. Because political

liberty is not one of the things that Paul treated as a necessity. A slave in the Roman Empire certainly didn't have political liberty.

He didn't have any liberty. He didn't have any rights. He didn't own anything.

He could be put to death by his master, and his master would never punish for it. The man had no rights whatsoever. He was totally a slave.

And Paul never said to the masters, release your slaves. He did say, you masters, you treat your slaves justly and kindly and like a Christian ought to. And remember, you have a master in heaven.

But he said to the slaves, he says, you who are slaves, don't care anything about it. If you have a chance to receive liberty, he says, use it. Go ahead and take your chance.

If your master says, hey, I release you, then take advantage of it. You don't have to be a slave the rest of your life if you're given liberty. But he said, if not, just stay a slave.

Be a contented slave. Submit to your masters. And Peter said, submit to your masters, not only the good and gentle, but also to the evil and the cruel masters.

And he didn't say, you know, you should overthrow your master or work for political justice. Certainly, Paul could have pushed for that. But you know what Paul taught? It doesn't make any difference.

Now, with the kind of salvation we have, whether a man is slave or free. He said, if a man's a free man, he's a slave to the Lord. If a man's a slave, socially speaking, he's the Lord's free man.

Jesus is the great equalizer of social injustices. And while I, as a free man, have no right as a Christian to oppress anyone else, yet if I found myself in the position of the oppressed, I don't have the right as a Christian to seek to overthrow that situation. Because political salvation, political deliverance, is not part of the message today.

Now, for us, to feed the poor, to do righteously, to do justice, is part of Christianity. But to enforce this on pagan governments who have not surrendered to Christ, just because the end of having universal worldwide political liberty for all men is a worthy goal, that may be a worthy goal, but not a Christian goal, necessarily. Paul said, what do I have to do to judge those who are outside the church? God judges them.

I judge those who are inside the church. I can judge myself. And I can say, I hope I'm not oppressing anyone.

I hope none of my patterns of living are exploiting other people. But I can't judge people outside the church and say, now you've got to live the Christian way too, until they come to Christ. So the liberation theology has an idea of salvation, and it's a very popular one.

You might not have heard, but many of the more liberal theologians are right into it. The World Council of Churches has totally given over to it. It's the idea that salvation, that Jesus came to proclaim, is the Jewish idea from the Old Testament of salvation.

Political liberty, the year of jubilee, and the release of the slaves. But that's not a New Testament concept. Because Paul never advocated the release of all slaves.

Because he said, it doesn't matter to a Christian. If he's a slave, he's the Lord's free man. If he's a free man, he's the Lord's slave.

And that's kind of hard for us to swallow, because he's essentially saying, our spiritual condition is what's all important. Jesus said something similar, though he wasn't talking about slavery, but he emphasized the same point when he said, if your right hand offended you, cut it off and cast it from you. It's better to live out your life in a handicapped position and go to heaven, or enter into life, he said, than to maintain your perfect health and the unity of all your parts, and end up going to hell.

In other words, what is all important is where you end up eternally. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world in this life and loses his soul? The whole point Jesus is making, and Paul is making, is Christians should not be complaining about their earthly lot. Maybe they've got a handicap, maybe they're sickly, maybe they're poor, maybe they're in an oppressed society.

But that's not what their concern should be. They should be rejoicing in all these things, more than conquerors, through Christ who loved us, because we're conquering our sins, and that is our dreadful enemy. Now, I certainly think if I had any influence and had power to do so, I would certainly seek to influence those who are oppressing other people to stop doing so.

That would be on my heart to do. But that's not our message. That's a Jewish concept of salvation, Old Testament, and Peter clearly says the Jews didn't even understand salvation properly.

It's the New Testament where we see the true spiritual nature of salvation. It's deliverance from sin, and not from political bondage. Now, some important things we need to know about salvation.

First of all, let's talk about salvation in its spiritual character. How does a person get saved? Well, obviously, one thing that might seem to not need to be said, but I must say it anyway, is that salvation is of the Lord. Even the name Jesus tells us that.

Jehovah is salvation. That's what the name Jesus means, and therefore, there's a doctrinal statement in His name. It is Jehovah is God.

It is the Lord who is salvation, which means, of course, man cannot save himself. If man

could save himself from his sins, then the salvation of Jesus Christ would be an optional matter. Why is it that we say Jesus is the only way that man can be saved? Some people say, that makes God seem awful narrow-minded.

Why can't a good devout Jew, or devout Buddhist, or devout Hindu be saved just as much as a devout Christian? Is God narrow-minded? Does God reject all of their piety and so forth just because it's not offered in the right name? Well, the Bible seems to say the answer to that is yes, God does reject it, but the whole issue is on another level. The fact of the matter is, a devout Jew in obedience to the law, or a devout Buddhist following the Eightfold Path, or a devout Hindu seeking through many reincarnations to reach nirvana, or a devout anything else other than a Christian, regardless of what his eternal condition is, he is not saved from his sins. He is still dominated in his own character by sin.

Therefore, he has not experienced salvation. As long as he is still dominated by sin and Buddha doesn't have what it takes to release him from sin. And Moses didn't have it either.

And by the way, Moses got his religion from God and Buddha didn't. And Moses couldn't even do it. Moses could tell you what you should do, but he couldn't help you do it.

He couldn't change you. He couldn't deliver you from the bondage and the prison of sin. Therefore, man is incapable of saving himself.

It must come only through the provision that God has provided. We are born altogether in sin, the Bible teaches us. The Bible says we are born incapable of pleasing God.

He that is in the flesh does not fulfill the law of God. Neither indeed can he. You can't keep the law of God in the flesh because you've got a sinful nature working all against you.

Romans 7 is about that. Paul said, I long to do what's right. I read the law of God.

I agree with it. I say, yes, amen, that's true. The law of God is good and true.

However, there's another problem. He says, I find in my members another power, another dynamic working against the standards that I approve with my mind. And this other power inclines me toward sin and toward things I don't approve of so that I find that I do the things I hate and the things I would do I don't do.

In other words, knowing the law of Moses, having the best religious standards, whether they're Jewish, Buddhist, Hinduistic or any other kind of standards, even Christian standards, even trying to live by the Sermon on the Mount. Having the right standards is not what saves a person. A person needs deliverance from this principle inside that's sin.

And there's only one thing that can deliver that, and that's the power of a new life, which Jesus accomplished and released when he rose from the dead. See, Jesus lived a natural life and died just like a natural man does. But when he rose from the dead, he was not in a natural life anymore.

He had passed into a glorious new creation. An eternal life had begun. And he is, by virtue of his resurrection from the dead, able to impart and share that new kind of life, the life in the Spirit, in which Paul could say that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death.

The new life that Jesus released when he defeated death and sin at the cross in his resurrection has brought into being a new kind of life and a new kind of power which is saving us, which saves us. Now, there are three aspects of salvation that we need to be aware of. There is the past, the present, and the future aspect.

There are theological terms for these aspects. One of those terms is justification. We find this in the Bible, justified, justification.

Someone has said justified means just as if I'd never sinned. And that's pretty good. It's true.

When I am justified, it's just as if I'd never sinned. Because justification means I'm declared just, which means righteous. This is a legal term.

When a person comes to court and he's accused of a crime, the judge has one of two options. He can condemn the man in court or he can justify him or we would say acquit. We would say acquit the man.

If he condemns him, he declares that the man is in fact guilty of the crimes of which he's committed, of which he is accused. But if the judge acquits or justifies, he is declaring that the man is innocent. And justification is a legal term that means declared to be innocent, declared to be righteous.

We stand before God and we really have sinned. We really have done things worthy of death. But justification is the condition where we stand before God, guilty sinners, and yet he says, You've never sinned.

I acquit you. I declare you righteous and just. On what basis can that be done? Certainly not through any deeds that we could do ourselves because though I might, and I have not been able to do so and I don't think anyone has, but suppose I theoretically could turn over a new leaf today and never sin again.

Could I be justified in that way? Well, let me give you a parallel on the worldly level to help illustrate the answer to that. Suppose I went out and committed murder and I killed three or four people. And I got away with it for a while and they weren't able to catch

me.

And let's say I made it for five or six years before they finally apprehended me and they brought me to court. And I lived a clean life for those five or six years. I didn't murder any more people.

But I got captured anyway and they brought me to court for my old crimes. Now, how strong an argument would I have if I came to the judge and said, Yes, it's true. I killed those three people.

But you know, for the past five years, I haven't killed a single person. So I think you really ought to let me go. I haven't killed anyone for five years.

Now, would that make a strong defense? Well, it would in today's courts because justice is thrown out. But where justice is observed, it would make no difference how many years you've lived without killing people. You don't get any special commendation for not killing people.

That's what you're supposed to do is not kill people. You don't go out and give people a badge on the street because they haven't killed anyone yet. They just are doing what they're expected to do.

If we lived the rest of our lives and never sinned again, or as Jesus put it, if you obey all things that you're commanded to do, all you can say is, We're unprofitable servants. We've done only that which we were required to do. In other words, I've got no credit on my record simply for living a clean life because I was expected to do that.

Where I'm in trouble is if I don't do that and the problem is I don't. So even if I could live a clean life from now on, I couldn't erase the past. I couldn't change the fact that I have crimes on my record.

Therefore, there's absolutely nothing I can do to obtain justification for myself. The only thing that can be done to justify me is for the penalty to be paid, the penalty to be served. There are crimes for which a penalty must be exacted.

And the gospel of justification by faith is this, that because we have faith in Christ, we are associated with Him in His death. We are related to Him through our faithfulness to Him. Our faith in Him has brought us into relationship with Him and an identification that in the sight of God, when Jesus died, our guilt and our sins were laid upon Him.

Or as Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 5.21, 2 Corinthians 5.21 says, He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Jesus took our sins, He became sin for us, just like the sacrifices in the Old Testament did when the priest would lay his hands on the lamb before it was dead and confess the sins of the people, signifying a transfer of their guilt to the lamb. Then he'd kill the lamb, the lamb

died as a substitute for the people.

It was symbolically as though the person had died for his own sins, the penalty was paid. Now we have sins on our record. We can never be declared righteous on the basis of anything we do now.

We can't change the past. The only thing we can hope for is that the penalty will be paid and we'll come out of it alive. But how could that happen? Someone's got to die, the wages of sin is death.

And of course the gospel is Jesus became our representative, took our guilt upon Himself, paid that penalty Himself so that now by virtue of what He has done for us, we can be declared just and righteous. We are justified. It's just as if we'd never sinned because someone else took every bit of our guilt right to the cross and paid that penalty for us.

This truth is spoken of in Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3, beginning with verse 23, it says, For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In other words, we're not just, we're not righteous. However, it says in the next verse, being justified or declared righteous freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a propitiation, which means a covering, an atonement, through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness, righteousness to declare God's justice for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God.

To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.

Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Now, all this is simply saying, since we are truly sinners, we truly are not innocent people. We have guilt in our history.

God had a problem He had to solve, a dilemma really. Here, He's got something He's got to work out. On the one hand, He is the creator who loves those things and persons that He's created.

He so loved the world. He loves us. He doesn't like to see us suffer.

Ezekiel 33, 11 says, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, God said. I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. 2 Peter 3 says, He's not willing that any should perish.

So, God had a problem. He didn't want anyone to go to hell. He didn't want anyone to perish.

He didn't make hell for people. It says in Matthew 25, hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, not for people to go to. However, people will go there if they choose.

But the problem here is, God loved us, did not want any to perish, and yet, He had to be a just ruler. As judge upon the throne, the just ruler of the universe, He could not simply ignore crimes. Because His love compelled Him to be just.

Is it loving to incarcerate a criminal? Well, it might not seem loving to the criminal, but it sure is loving to society. To let the criminal go free, out of love for the criminal, is to do something that is not very loving to all the people He's going to come in contact with, that He's going to rip off or kill later. See, love demands that justice be served.

God didn't just love me, the sinner, He loved the others who I've sinned against, too. Therefore, as a just God, He has to enforce justice. He's letting me walk free, just because He likes me.

Just because I'm His son. Just because I, you know, He's set His heart on me, He's got this problem. He doesn't want me to be condemned, but He has no choice.

I'm guilty, I am not just, I must be punished for my sins. How can God be just, and also be the justifier of sinners? How can He declare sinners to be just and Himself remain just? Here's the answer. He gave Jesus in our place to substitute for us, to be the propitiation for us.

So that, it says in verse 26, that He might be just and the justifier of those that believe in Jesus. God has solved His problem. God's problem never was how to justify sending people to hell.

Sometimes people think that's a philosophical problem. How can I believe in a loving God who'd send people to hell? Listen, that was never God's problem. He never had a problem justifying sending people to hell.

His problem was justifying saving them. How could He justify forgiving them? Going to hell is what they deserve. Going to hell is what I deserve.

Someone says, I can't believe God will send all those devout pygmies who are devoted to their deities to hell. Well, that's not really the way it is. The thing is, they're on the road to hell from the day they're born.

The question is, will the gospel get to them in time for Him to save them? Will the gospel get to them in time for Him to justify Him rescuing them from hell? Because every man has chosen a course deliberately, as well as by nature, that leads him toward hell. And the gospel is God's way of justifying God in justifying sinners. Jesus takes the penalty.

Now the just judge can say, your sentence is served because I have stepped down from

the bench to go to prison for you or to go to the electric chair for you. I can't just ignore this crime, but I can put myself in your place and go there and serve penalty myself. That is how Jesus justifies us.

That's what justification is. That's part of our salvation. But you know, that only deals with the past sins.

Justification does. Of course, it deals with our future sins in the sense that once I sin again, I can still be justified by repentance. It says in 1 John 1, 9, if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So justification takes care of all sins, including future sins, if I confess them after they're done. But the problem is, though I stand justified here today of all my past sins, justification does not take care of the problem of my continuing bent toward sin. Salvation has to not only deal with my sins, it has to deal with my sin.

My sin is my nature. And I could be given a blank forgiveness, a blanket forgiveness of all the crimes I've ever done, but if I'm still a hardened criminal inside, what good is it going to do me? I'm still going to pursue that self-destructive course. I need something more than justification.

Justification may be enough to get me to heaven, but justification does not deal with the question of how I'm going to live the rest of my life without sin. And there's another aspect of salvation which deals with the present situation. That is called sanctification.

Sanctification. It comes from the Greek word which means holy. Sanctification means to be made holy.

To have my character transformed. I don't just need to have my sins forgiven, I need to have that sin bent in me overcome. And the salvation of God, the salvation of Jesus is not just salvation from the penalty of my sins, which is justification, but it is also salvation from my sins themselves, from the power of my sins.

You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free from your slavery to sin. So, there is another aspect of salvation which is theologically called sanctification. Now these are biblical words.

Justification is a biblical word. Paul said, wherefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, in Romans 5.1. Also, he used the word sanctified, which has to do with the process by which we are being saved from the power of our sins. Justification deals with my past sins.

Sanctification deals with my present sinful bent. So, there's a past aspect and a present aspect. And sanctification is the process of the Holy Spirit working in me to overcome my sinful nature and to make me a new kind of person.

I think 1 Corinthians 6, I'll know in a moment. Okay. 1 Corinthians 6, yes.

Verses 9-11. 1 Corinthians 6, 9-11 says, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, means homosexuals, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, and by the way, that would probably refer to sadomasochists, abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. Then he says, And such were some of you.

You Christians, some of you were these things. Imagine a church full of ex-homosexual sadomasochists, extortioners, you know, all these things. Well, that's the kind of church that the early church was.

It was made up of people like that. And Paul says, And such were some of you, but not anymore. But now you are washed, but you are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are washed, we are justified, we are also sanctified. Now what that means is they aren't doing those things anymore. Not only are they forgiven, their past record as a fornicator or as an effeminate person or as an idolater or as an abuser of themselves with mankind or as a thief.

Their past record is cleaned up by justification. But they're not doing those things anymore either because of sanctification. Their character is undergoing a revolution.

The Holy Spirit is working the character of Christ into these individuals. Therefore, they don't do those things anymore. They not only are forgiven for the fact that they once did them, they've stopped doing them.

And that is part of salvation. That's what conversion is, is changing. Conversion means to change.

One of the true marks of a person that's really saved is that he's changed. And being changed from glory to glory into that same image, according to 2 Corinthians 3.18. So there's a change going on inside me. That change is called sanctification.

Look at 1 Thessalonians chapter 4 and verse 3 and following. 1 Thessalonians 4.3 and the verses following that. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor, holiness and honor, not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, which know not God, that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we have also forewarned you and testified.

For God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despises, despises not man, but God, who has given us his Holy Spirit. What is the main purpose of the Holy Spirit? To give us power for service, as we commonly hear? Well, the Holy Spirit does give us power for service.

But is that really the essential reason the Holy Spirit is given to us? I believe the real reason the Holy Spirit is given to us is for sanctification. The Holy Spirit is holy. When he takes up residence in your life and sets about to work in your life, what is he going to produce but his own nature of holiness? The Holy Spirit is called that because he's holy.

And when he lives in me, he wants to go about to sweep out the dirty corners of my life and make me holy. And he says, if you despise this teaching about sanctification, it's not man's teaching, but God's teaching, because it's the Holy Spirit that's been given to us to make us holy. And he says, this is the will of God, your sanctification.

You need to learn how to possess yourself, possess your body, control yourself in sanctification and honor. And so, this is something that is part of our salvation. We're not just forgiven, we're changing.

Justification takes care of the past sins. Sanctification takes care of my present bent towards sin. And that is a process.

There are churches and groups that teach a crisis sanctification event. A little bit like we charismatic to talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second experience of grace. So, there are some groups, I won't name them, but they're evangelical, good Christian groups, that teach that there's a second experience, a second work of grace called sanctification.

John Wesley, one of the great Christian leaders of a former generation, taught this himself. That you can have an experience after you've been saved a while of sanctification, which is a second experience where after that you don't sin anymore. And I just haven't found that to be true.

I have found that I've had tremendous impartations of grace to my life at times, where I've actually overcome tremendous habits of sin that used to dominate me. And I can see that there has been grace given me by the Holy Spirit to overcome, but I have not come to a place where I don't have any sin anymore. And I don't believe the Bible teaches this crisis event sanctification, where one moment you're unsanctified, the next moment you're totally sanctified.

I don't see it in the Bible. What I do see, sanctification is a process. Peter says in 2 Peter, Wherefore, add to your faith virtue, and add to virtue knowledge, and add to knowledge temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, agape.

In other words, add this, and then add this, and then add this. These are stages of development. This is growth into the image of Christ.

This is sanctification, a process, not a crisis. And that is part of our salvation. That is part of being saved from our sins.

Well, there's another aspect of salvation. Justification, sanctification, there is also glorification. Glorification is something that hasn't happened to us yet.

It has happened to Christ. He has been glorified in his resurrected body. We will not be glorified until he returns and gives us similar glorified bodies.

It says in Philippians 3.21, that when Jesus comes, he will change our vile body into the image or the likeness of his glorified body. We will be glorified too. Our bodies will be planted in dishonor but raised in glory.

The glorification in our experience will be the change from our mortal state to our immortal state. Along with this biochemical change, there will be a moral change that takes place. Because the nature that is in us that causes us to sin will no longer be present in the new glorified state.

When Jesus comes back, we will be like him for we shall see him as he is, 1 John 3.3 says. So, we will be sinless, completely sinless through the glorification process. This is a future thing.

It awaits the second coming of Christ. That's what it awaits. We will not have this glorified state until Jesus comes back and resurrects us into our glorified bodies.

This will be a salvation from the very presence of sin. We will no longer have to live in a world tainted by sin. We will no longer be tempted with sin.

There will be no more devil around to have to resist. We will be totally in a sinless environment with a sinless heart. Jesus came to save us from our sins, from three aspects of our sins.

From the guilt of our sins, which is what justification does. It deals with the past. From the power of sin, which is what sanctification does.

It deals with the present. And from the very presence of sin, ultimately, which is at glorification time. That deals with the future.

Past, present, and future. The penalty of sin, the power of sin, and the presence of sin. All dealt with in this great salvation.

It says in Hebrews, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? It's a great package. And it all has to do with sin. And I have been justified.

I am being sanctified and I shall be glorified. That is the assurance I have as a saved person. As a person who is being saved and a person who shall be saved.

Essentially, I can say I am saved. But I can also say I will be saved. And I can also say I am being saved now.

Even as it says in that verse we read in 1 Peter 1.9. It says you are receiving, presently receiving, the end of your faith, which is the salvation of your souls. Your souls are undergoing a process of an aspect of salvation, namely sanctification. Justification is accomplished.

Sanctification is in process. Glorification will take place when Jesus comes back. And these are the aspects of salvation.

The salvation of Christ. Now, what are the conditions of salvation? I said man cannot save himself. There is nothing we can do to change our nature.

Can a leopard change his spots? Can an Ethiopian change his skin, the prophet said? If so, so can you who are accustomed to doing evil, change and do good. In other words, you can't. You can't change yourself.

There is nothing you can do to save yourself. It is all of the Lord. But does that mean there are no conditions that have to be met? If salvation is all of the Lord and there are no conditions for man to meet, then it would follow since God wants no one to be lost that he will save everyone.

And therefore the universalist has grounds to stand on because he would say God wants everyone saved. And salvation is totally a work of God. Man has nothing to do with it.

Therefore, God who has everything to do with salvation will bring everyone to salvation since he doesn't want anyone to be lost. Well, it's a bit of a problem because even though salvation cannot be earned or acquired by any human effort, yet there are conditions to be fulfilled if you wish to have salvation. When my daughter was born, I mean my first daughter, she was born in a hospital.

My other children have not been born in hospitals, but my first one was. And the hospital gives the names of the parents of every newborn baby to a whole bunch of baby clothes and manufacturers and things like that. So I got a whole flood of offers in the mail from stores and people who said, Congratulations on having a new baby.

If you will simply come down to our store, we have a wonderful gift to give you. Well, that was very nice of them. They had a free gift to give me.

Suppose I went into the store and I said, Oh, this gift is too nice for you to give me for free. I'll pay for it. Well, that would be an insult.

They wanted to give it to me for free. If someone wants to give you something out of generosity, you don't offer to pay for it. In the case of salvation, if you wanted to pay for your salvation, it'd be an insult.

Anything you'd offer is more than you'll ever be able to pay. It's as though someone is offering you a Mercedes Benz. Oh, I couldn't take that for free.

Let me give you a dime. That's an insult. And for God to offer us salvation and say, Oh, let me give you a life of perfect obedience.

That's not big enough. That's not enough. Perfect obedience won't cancel out the debt of the past.

It's a too small a price. You have not the price to pay. Now, if I went and offered to pay, I'd be presumptuous because they offered it to me for a gift.

If I went in to claim it, I would not be earning it. I would still be getting a free gift, but I would only be meeting the conditions of receiving a free gift. Suppose I didn't go into the store and I called them on the phone and said, I really appreciate the fact that you sent me this card, but I don't think I'll be able to come in today.

Could you just put the gift in the mail and send it to this address? I see you have my address. You could just send the gift. Thank you.

They would say, No, I'm sorry. You have to come in and pick it up. Now, would I be justified in saying, Wait a minute.

I thought it was a free gift. Now, I have to earn it by coming in? No, that's not earning it because many people come into their store and they don't get free items. Just by walking into the doors of the store doesn't mean you've earned the merchandise.

You still have to pay for merchandise, generally speaking. Coming into the store doesn't earn it, but you can't get it unless you do come into the store. There is a condition that you have to meet, but meeting that condition doesn't earn anything.

It simply puts you in the position to receive that which is available, free. And so also is salvation. Salvation cannot be earned, but it can be spurred.

It can be lost by not meeting the conditions. God is offering salvation as a free gift, but there are conditions for receiving it. One of those conditions, obviously, is faith.

That's why not everyone's saved, because not everyone meets that condition. It says in Hebrews 4, and I think it's verse 3, it says, And it says concerning the Jews who didn't go into the Promised Land, The gospel was preached to them as it is to us, but the word preached did not profit them because they didn't mix it with faith. The gospel has been preached to us too, and it may not profit us if we don't mix it with faith, if we don't

believe it, in other words.

Many hear the gospel who don't get saved. Why? They don't believe it. Through faith you're saved.

You're saved by grace through faith. Not of yourselves. It's the gift of God, not of works.

But though it's a gift, there's still a condition. You have to believe. You have to have faith.

That's a condition. That doesn't mean you earn it by believing, because you can believe and God still doesn't owe you anything. It's still a gift when he gives it to you, but if you don't believe, you won't get it.

If you don't come into the shop, if you don't step into the place where the blessing is to be found, then you can't have it. If you don't have faith, it is in the realm of faith in God that this blessing is to be received. There are other conditions implied, because the faith that saves us is not just any old faith.

There's more than one kind of faith. Did you know that? There's several species. If you go to a spiritual zoo, you can see the different species of faith on display.

And one of those species of faith is the kind the demons have. It says in James chapter 2, the devils also believe and tremble. But are they saved? The answer obviously is no, they are not saved, even though they believe.

So they must have a certain kind of belief or faith that isn't a saving faith. Why aren't they saved? Because the faith they have does not lead them to repentance. It does not produce any change in their lives.

They know certain things to be true, they believe certain things to be true about Jesus, but they don't have a kind of faith that changes the way they live. And there is a species of faith that is dead. James said in James chapter 2, faith without works is dead.

Now he is not saying that we earn salvation by doing any good works. That's far from what he's saying. He's saying we're saved by faith, but only one kind of faith works.

The kind the devil has doesn't work. The devil has faith, but he's not saved. Many people have the same kind of faith the devil has.

A dead faith that doesn't produce any change in their lives. They believe certain facts about the gospel, but their lives are not changed. Therefore they have a faith that is dead, and that which is dead cannot impart life.

A dead faith can't give you eternal life. You have to have a living faith in order to receive life through it. And so James says, if a man says I have faith and has not works, can faith

save him? A rhetorical question.

The answer is no. That faith can't. He has a faith that does not produce actions.

It does not produce any change in his behavior. He gives the example. If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily clothes and comes unto you and you say, be warmed and filled.

But you don't give him those things needful to the body, he says, what does it profit? Even so, faith, if it has not actions, works, is dead being alone. So there's a certain kind of faith that is the condition for salvation. We know faith is a condition.

You can't get saved without faith. But now we find you can't even get saved with every species of faith. There's only one species that's saved.

It's the only kind that's alive. All the others are stuffed animals in the spiritual zoo. They're not alive.

There's one living faith and it is a kind of faith which when a person has it, he lives differently. It is a faith that takes grip on his will. It grips his heart.

It makes him want to do something different than he did before. It produces a new kind of actions. Now if you think that that's in conflict with anything Paul said about faith and justification by faith, we need to consider more completely what Paul said.

Paul did say we are saved by faith apart from works, which he meant the works do not earn our salvation for us. Only faith is the condition. But he did not in any way imply that good works are not necessary.

Let me show you three Pauline statements. Just because there are many people who mistakenly feel that James and Paul were on different tracks. James told us that faith without works is dead.

Did this disagree with Paul? Let's look at Galatians 5 and verse 6. Galatians 5, 6. Paul said, For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith that works through love or by love. Circumcision won't get you in. Being uncircumcised won't either.

The only thing that will get you in, the only thing that avails with God is this. Faith. But what kind of faith? He said faith that works through love.

A faith that produces something. A faith that changes the way you live. That produces actions that are in agreement with your profession of faith.

If you say you believe something and your actions don't line up with what you say you believe, your faith is a dead faith. If you say you believe something and your actions line

up with that, your faith is a living faith. That's what Paul is saying.

That's what James is saying. And if you have a dead faith, you're not saved yet. If you have a living faith, that's what it takes.

Let's look at some other Pauline statements about this. Let's go to Ephesians chapter 2. Oops. Went too far.

Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8 through 10. Paul said, For by grace you are saved through faith. And that is not of yourself.

The faith doesn't come out of your own self. It is also a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

Now, we're saved by faith. And that faith is a gift from God. We haven't earned that faith even by our works.

However, now that we have faith, God expects something from us. We're created unto or to result in good works. The faith that we have will produce good works if it is a saving faith.

Look with me at Titus. Titus chapter 3 and verse 5. Paul said, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. By the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Now, he says we are not saved by works of righteousness. We're saved only by faith, by grace through faith. But look back one chapter earlier in Titus.

The same writer, Paul, says in Titus 2 and verse 14. Titus 2, 14. Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify himself a peculiar people, zealous of what? Of good works.

The purpose of Jesus giving himself for us was to purify us so that we would be zealous for good works. Because the saving faith, when it takes residence in our hearts, makes us zealous to do a different thing, to do good works instead of our former bad works. So, Paul taught the same thing James did.

The faith that saves us is a faith that motivates to live life a different way than before. A faith that is only academic and mental and does not have a moral pressure that it puts upon a person to do something different than before is not the faith that saves. Now, that tells us, of course, that faith will produce good works if it's a saving faith.

So, we are saved by faith of a certain time. But what kind of things does this faith produce? The answer to that is works of obedience to Christ. Not works of the Mosaic

Law.

Not going back to circumcision and keeping the Ten Commandments and keeping Sabbath and keeping the Holy Days and keeping the dietary laws. Those kinds of works won't save, but works of obedience to Christ. These are the works that are produced in a living, saving faith.

Saving faith will produce people who live obediently to Jesus Christ. Let me give you some scriptures that make that extremely clear. Let's look at Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 9. Boy, this is just not enough time for all this stuff here.

Hebrews 5 and verse 9 says concerning Jesus, And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation. To whom? Unto all them that obey him. Now, why didn't he say unto all those who believe in him? Why did he say that Jesus became the author of salvation to those who obey him? Because those who believe him are the same people who obey him.

If they are believing in a saving sense. If they are believing in the sense that Paul used that term when he was talking about being justified by grace and through faith, that faith is something that produces obedience. So that he could say, on one hand, those who believe him are saved, and in this case, those who obey him are saved because they're the same people.

The same people who believe are the ones who obey. Okay, look at Acts, the book of Acts chapter 5 and verse 32. Acts 5.32, Peter speaking to the Sanhedrin says, And we are his witnesses of these things.

And so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. Acts 5.32, Peter says God gives the Holy Ghost, as we know he gives the Holy Ghost to Christians, to save people. In one place Paul said, if you don't have the Spirit of Christ, you're not one of his.

So a Christian is a person who has the Holy Ghost. He gives the Holy Ghost to those who obey him. Again, obedience is in view.

Look at 1 Peter chapter 1. And by the way, in my notes I have a long list of scriptures to establish this one point, and I can't give them all because of our time limitations, but let me give you one or two more. 1 Peter 1 and verse 2 says that we are elect or chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through what? Sanctification by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us unto, that means resulting in, obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now, we have been chosen by God the Father according to his foreknowledge to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, resulting in obedience to Jesus Christ. The people of God are to be an obedient people. Sometimes when you talk to Christians about how their actions

are disobedient to something or another that Jesus taught, they say, oh, you're legalistic, you're putting a works trip, I'm saved by grace, I'm saved through faith, I'm not saved by works.

Well, you may not be saved by works, but you sure aren't saved without them either. You're saved by faith, but any faith that doesn't have works is not the kind that saves. Therefore, obedience to Jesus Christ is a foregone conclusion.

Now, obedience to Jesus Christ demands certain things. For instance, repentance. Jesus said, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

If you don't repent, you'll perish, he said. Repentance means turning from your sins. That's, if you have faith, you will repent.

If you don't repent, then you don't have saving faith. Repentance is a fruit of saving faith. When Jesus began his preaching in Mark chapter 1 and verse 15, Mark 1, 15, Jesus' ministry was summarized in these words.

He began to say, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel. Repent was the first word of the gospel.

Repent and believe. If you believe, you will repent, by the way, because the saving faith will cause you to do what Jesus said he said to repent. Another thing he said to do, and he commanded this, is to be baptized in water.

Now, I don't teach baptismal regeneration, as some people do. Some people think if you don't get baptized, you're going to hell. I don't teach that.

But I teach if you don't have an obedient faith, you're not saved. And if you do have an obedient faith and you're well informed that Jesus has commanded his people to be baptized, you'll want to. A person who doesn't want to be baptized does not have a saving faith unless he has not been told that Jesus commands it.

Because a saving faith will make me want to do whatever I know Jesus wants. And if I don't know what he wants, then I might not do it and I could still have the right kind of faith. But if I do know what he wants and I don't do it, I don't have that kind of faith.

So repentance and baptism, confession of Christ publicly, is another thing that he requires. He that denies me before men, I'll deny. But he that confesses me before men, I will confess before my Father.

Public confession of Jesus is something that a saving faith will produce. And receiving the Holy Spirit, Jesus said to his disciples, receive ye the Holy Spirit. This is also something that obedience would involve.

So if you have a saving faith, you will go through these various steps. You'll repent, be

baptized, confess Christ openly, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. These are the things which, these are not in themselves the conditions for salvation.

Only faith is. But in so far as you are well instructed in what Jesus requires, a saving faith will motivate you to do all these things. And so if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead and confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, you shall be saved, Paul said.

So these are the things that, this is everything actually I planned to say about salvation with the exception of a couple small points. We've run out of tape for those points. I'm sorry to say.

I could tell you what those points are and you could decide whether you wanted to stay and hear them. I was going to talk about once saved, always saved. How about instead of me teaching it, if I just give you a bunch of scriptures.

I'll give you a brief, I could teach it at length. I guess I could give a whole session on it, but I'm not going to detain you that long. I have a list of scriptures I would have shared if I had time.

What about this once saved, always saved? That's definitely an issue in the study of salvation. Is it possible for me to be saved today and not be saved tomorrow? Some say no. Some say if you're really saved, you'll never backslide.

If you backslide, you just prove that you weren't saved in the first place. Because of the keeping power of grace, God won't let you fall away. On the other hand, there are some that say, well, yet we have known people who have had all the fruits of salvation in their lives.

And yet today they're not walking with the Lord. Are they still saved even though they're not walking with the Lord? Can a person be saved who's walked away from God? Now, see, one is a philosophical question only. Can I be saved? Or the question is, if I'm really saved, can I fall away? Well, that issue is a philosophical point.

Some would say, well, no, I don't think God would let you do it. And there are some scriptures that might indicate that to some people. We'll take them away.

But there is the practical reality that we have known people who gave every evidence of being saved for years on end, bore fruit for God, and then walked away from God. And the question must be asked, are they still saved, even though they walked away from God? I'll give you my answer in my own words, and then I'll give you the scriptures that support the position I hold. I believe it's not easy to walk away from Christ if you're really saved.

There are people who have a false conversion, as the parable of the seed that fell on

stony ground shows. They spring up and on with joy, but they have no root. And when the sun comes up, when the persecution comes, they fall away very quickly.

And probably they were never really saved in the first place, in a real sense. They never were rooted in God's hand. Therefore, they were easy prey to fall away.

There are false conversions, and this is a very common phenomenon. And I would say the majority of cases where you've seen someone who said a sinner's prayer, and joined himself to the church, and then later walked away from God, and we've seen many, many people like that, most of those probably were false conversions. Probably.

But, just because it's difficult to fall away from Christ doesn't mean it's absolutely impossible. There is an act of your will involved in coming to Christ. You do choose to obey or not to obey.

That's what Joshua said, choose you this day whom you will serve. You want to choose God or not, it's a choice you make. And it is something people choose.

And if I choose to obey God, do I thereafter lose my capacity of free choice, or do I still possess it? Well, nothing in the Bible indicates that I've lost my power to continue making free choices once I've been saved. Therefore, I have theoretically the power to choose not to be a Christian anymore, if I will. And God will honor my choice, because he will honor my free will that he's given me.

If I choose to be saved, then I am saved. Not because my will has the power, but because God has made that option open to me. And if I choose to take that option through faith and repentance, then I'm a saved person.

But suppose I've been saved for a while, I come under heavy trials and I fall away. And I make a choice, I don't want anything to do with Christ anymore. I want to become a Satanist, I want to become a Buddhist, I want to become something else and not believe in Christ.

Am I still saved against my will? I don't believe so. I believe that salvation has to do with being with the shepherd. A person who's walking with the sheep that's with the shepherd is one of his sheep.

Now, a sheep can wander away from the shepherd and the shepherd will seek him out. But if that sheep is never restored to the shepherd, he's not there anymore, he's not safe anymore. And the Bible would indicate that salvation is a continuing condition based on our continuing faith.

And there are scriptures that I will show you that indicate that if we cease to have faith, we will also cease to be saved. Now, that doesn't mean this happens very often. As I said, most people who decide to walk away from Jesus probably never really knew him

very well.

But it is a possibility that some who have known him could turn away. I know of a case, I was just thinking of recently, let me call it to mind again now. I was just thinking of it a minute ago, in fact.

A case where a man became a Christian, and for many years he was leading, he was a pastor of a church, and he had good fruit in his life, and he was serving God with all his heart for many years. And then he was tempted to sin with a woman in the church. He left his wife and ran off with the woman in the church.

And to my knowledge, he never returned to the Lord. He just went more and more into sin, became hardened against God, and obviously made a choice. He made a choice not to follow Christ anymore, not to be one of his disciples anymore.

And the question is, is that man still saved, even though he's chosen not to be a Christian, even though he's chosen not to follow Jesus? I believe the scriptures that we're about to show you would say he is not. But I believe he can return to the Lord. But I believe that if he dies in a state of rejecting Christ and Christ's Lordship, he is not what the Bible would call a saved individual.

Jesus said in Matthew 10.22, He that endures to the end shall be saved. Matthew 10.22. He also said the exact same thing in Matthew 24.13. Matthew 24.13, He that endures to the end shall be saved. Also, Jesus made a statement in John 15.

John 15 is where Jesus said, I am the vine, you are the branches, my father is the husbandman. Now, he says in verse 4 of John 15, Abide in me. That means remain, stay in me.

And I in you, as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it stays in the vine, no more can you except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing.

If a man abide not in me, if you do not remain in Christ, in other words, if a man does not abide in me, he is cast away as a branch and is withered. And men gather them and cast them into the fire and they are burned. And that does not sound like they end up there in a saved condition.

They do not continue with Christ, they wither up, they bear no fruit, eventually they are good for nothing but burning. Now, to use the same image, or a very similar image, the Apostle Paul in Romans 11 made a statement about us being branches. But this time the image was not of a vine, but of an olive tree.

And in Romans chapter 11, Paul is talking about how most of the Jews are not saved today because they did not have faith in Christ. And they were figuratively cut off from

the olive tree of the covenant and relationship with God. And that we have been grafted into the tree because we did have faith.

He says in Romans 11, 18, Not against the branches, but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee, thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear, for if God did not spare the natural branches, take heed, lest he also spare not thee.

Behold the goodness and the severity of God, on them which fell severity, but toward thee goodness, if you continue in his goodness. Otherwise you also shall be cut off. Did you want that reference? Okay.

If you continue in his goodness, then his goodness will be extended toward you. Otherwise, that is if you don't continue in his goodness, just like Jesus said, if you don't abide in me, what happens to the branch? They're thrown in the fire. He says, if you don't continue in my goodness, in God's goodness, you will also be cut off.

I don't know how he could say it more plainly and more ominously. Look at 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians 15 says, as he talks about the gospel, he says, by which you also stand, or you also are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain.

Now, he says, he's afraid they're drifting away from the gospel. And he reminds him of what gospel he preached. And he says, this is the gospel by which you are saved, if you keep it in mind.

Keep the gospel I preached in mind so that you don't drift away, because if you drift away from it, you have believed in vain. Your faith will produce nothing. If you fall away from the gospel, as Paul preached it, he indicated, you will have believed in vain.

Look at Hebrews 3. We'll just go real quickly through these. Hebrews 3 and verse 4. For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. If we hold our faith to the end, we are partakers of Christ and will be partakers of Christ to the end.

In Hebrews 10, 38 and 39, he said, now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we, we trust, are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe unto the saving of the soul.

That is, we continue to believe so that our souls will ultimately be saved. He that endures to the end shall be saved. We are not among those, the writer says, who are drawing back to perdition.

Perdition means damnation. There are some who do draw back, and they draw back not

into a saved condition, but into damnation. The next book, James chapter 5, has an interesting statement in it.

James 5, verses 19 and 20 says, brethren, if any of you do err from the truth. Now, who is he talking to? Brethren, Christians. If any of you brethren do err from the truth, and one converts him, let him know that he that converted the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

Apparently saying that if you Christians, any of you brethren, do err from the truth, you wander away from Christ, if someone converts you back, they have saved your soul from death. Implying that if they don't bring you back, you aren't going to be saved from death. You need someone to save your soul from death if you're wandering away from Christ.

In 1 Peter 1.5, we'll just run right through here real quick. 1 Peter 1.5, speaking about how we are kept secure as Christians so that we don't fall away. It says, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

The ultimate, last salvation, glorification. This is something we're being kept unto. Through the power of God.

It's not my power that's going to keep me saved, it's God's power, but through faith. We are kept by the power of God through faith. As long as faith is engaged, then the power of God is engaged.

But if I turn from the faith, I will be cut off like a fruitless branch too. That's what Paul said. If you continue in faith.

If you don't, you'll be cut off too. So, as long as I have faith in Christ, it's not a matter of me doing enough good works to stay saved. It's not a works trip.

It's just a matter of continuing to trust in Christ. Now, I can be sure I'm going to be saved because I'm going to continue to trust in Christ. That's a decision I've made.

It's not a matter of whether something's going to come over me that overwhelms me, some temptation I can't endure, because Christ has given me already a promise that no temptation is going to come to me that's more than I can endure. And I have made my choice. I'm going to trust Christ to the end, no matter what happens.

If I'm tortured, if I'm tempted, no matter what happens, I've made a decision. I will trust him. And because I will trust him, he will keep me by his power.

And no one can pluck me out of my Father's hand. But if I'm foolish enough to not decide to continue trusting Jesus, to entertain doubts or to succumb to a temptation to turn from Christ, to give in under pressure, and I leap from the Father's hand, Jesus didn't say

there's any security from that. We do have eternal security as long as we stay with Jesus.

As long as, in other words, we keep our faith in him. We are kept by the power of God through faith. Let me show you one other verse here.

More could be brought up, but this will be our last on this. 2 Peter 2, verse 20-22. For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, if they are again entangled therein, that is in the world, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

Listen, if they backslide after being escaped through the knowledge of God, the world, their condition is worse than before they were saved in the first place. Because they're now hardened. Before they were first converted, they might not have been hardened.

They might have just been ignorant. But now they've made a decision to go back into the world. Their condition is worse than when they were pristine unbelievers because they have now made a decision which has hardened them toward God.

It's not necessarily insurmountable, but it's worse than before. It's harder than before to turn back. It says in verse 24, It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog has returned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. So these verses give me the impression that if we continue to have faith in Jesus, of a living faith, if we really are committed to Christ through faith, there is nothing to fear. We never can lose our salvation.

But if we do not maintain a commitment of faith in Christ, we can foolishly cast off the salvation that has been given to us freely. It's not a matter of losing my salvation. It's a matter of giving it up.

I received salvation by an act of my will. It will require an act of my will to forfeit it as well. And God won't let you go that easy.

It's clear about the prodigal son. Even though the prodigal son had run away from home and was not at the moment living for his father, yet there were still family ties there. When the lost sheep runs away, the shepherd goes looking for it.

He leaves the ninety-nine to bring it back. Because God has paid such a high price for you, he won't let you go easy. If you inherit a slave for free, if it runs away, you're not going to care as much about it as if you just paid a high price for it on a slave market.

If I get a ten-cent ballpoint pen from the store, I might not be too careful about leaving it

around and losing it. But if I pay twenty bucks, which I never would do, for a more valuable pen, I'm going to make sure I've got that in my pocket before I leave, before I really love using it, because I've got more invested in it. God has something invested in us that forbids him to let us get away easily.

And many have sought to run away from Christ, but he has won them back over. But if he cannot win them back over, because he cannot necessarily violate their will, if he cannot win them back over, there is no security for that person who has deliberately and redundantly turned from Christ and gone back to the world. They're like a dog that's returned to their vomit, a pig that was washed, going back to the lion.