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**Reconciling the World to Himself
(2 Corinthians 5:19)**

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**A Propitiation in His Blood
(Romans 3:25)**

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**The Will of God Your Sanctification
(1 Thessalonians 4:3)**

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Adam and Eve

Flesh is corporeal in that "God formed the man from the dust of the ground" (Ge 2:7). But it lacks the dimension of life. For this reason God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being" (:7). Therefore you might say that there is an inner as well as outer man. This is reflected in "who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him" (1Co 2:11)? On the sixth day "God created man in His own image" (Ge 1:27) in "spirit and soul and body" (1Th 5:23). "It is I who made the earth and created man upon it" (Isa 45:12). "It was Adam who was first created" (1Ti 2:13) and in Hebrew his name means "humanity." In an extended sense the word "flesh" is also humanity. The human race inherits from Adam for, "as in Adam all" (1Co 15:22), applies to everyone. "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Ge 1:31). Therefore it cannot be concluded that man is inherently sinful.

When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden he "commanded the man" (Ge 2:16) "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (:17). It was not said that "you will drop dead" as if it was poisonous. So to die must mean that death was not part of God's scheme of things, but it would transpire if Adam was disobedient. "The Lord fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man" (Ge 2:22) and they "were both naked and were not ashamed" (:25).

However, Eve "took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (3:6). "It was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1Ti 2:14).

Transgression is defined as lawlessness and it is against God's instruction because God asked, "'Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?'" (Ge 3:11). But when they ate of the fruit of the tree "the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked so they . . . made coverings for themselves" (3:7). They had "become like one of us knowing good and evil" (:22). Did they know being naked as good or evil? They didn't feel shame before, but it seems they did now. They had to replace the innocence of their previous condition with a covering and God, himself, had to make "garments of skin for Adam and his wife" (:21). In Laodicea they didn't know that they were "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and **naked**" (Rev 3:17). God advises "buy from me . . . white garments that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your **nakedness** may not be revealed" (3:18).

What had Adam done? He was "the one who sinned" (Ro 5:16). What is sin? It is a "transgression" (:15) or "offense" (:15 KJV). It is also a "trespass" (:15 RSV). You've seen signs saying "NO TRESPASSING." "God commanded . . . you shall not eat" (Ge 2:16-17). But Adam violated the command. "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). "All have sinned and fall

short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). The result was "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (:12). But others "had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam" (:14). Then "death spread to all men" (:12) because "in Adam all die" (1Co 15:22). Sin is the culprit because "the sting of death is sin" (1Co 15:56). "The wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23). Therefore "sin reigned in death" (5:21) and "death reigned" (:17). "Death works in us" (2Co 4:12). One might respond that everyone has to die naturally anyway. But you should consider "him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14).

Some might say that the rendition of Adam and Eve is just a metaphor because evolution proves otherwise. But God said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife . . . cursed is the ground because of you" (Ge 3:17). "By a man came death" (1Co 15:21) and "you will all likewise perish" (Lk 13:3). Death is firstly interpreted as physical death. "Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death" (Heb 11:5). "It is appointed for men to die once" (9:27). Sin is the reason for the problem. You are "dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). Consequently you "shall be condemned" (Mk 16:16) and therefore must be "saved from wrath" (Ro 5:9). Sin contributes to the inevitable. It is "cause and effect" because it's a "law of sin and of death" (8:2). "The outcome of those things is death" (6:21) since there "is a sin leading to death" (1Jn 5:16). It is said we live in the flesh. However, "if you are living according to the flesh, you must die" (Ro

8:13). "The mind set on the flesh is death" (8:6). "With my flesh [I serve] the law of sin" (7:25) "resulting in death" (6:16). "While we were in the flesh, the sinful passions . . . were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death: (7:5).

Every human knows that occasionally he will sin. There is no excuse, for Paul reminds that "we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin" (Ro 3:9). Some believe that Adam and Eve's existence is figurative and that the Bible's explanation of sin is allegorical. But "the first man Adam became a living being" (1Co 15:45). "The first man is from the earth . . . [and] so also are those who are earthy" (:47-48). "It was Adam who was first created and then Eve (1Ti 2:13). "But the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression" (:14). The consequences are imposed "even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of Adam's offense" (Ro 15:14). Due to a solidarity with Adam and "not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own" (Ro 10:3) Jesus warned the Pharisees, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men" (Lk 16:15). God "rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done" (Ge 2:2). "The works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb 4:3). But when Adam disobeyed God he demonstrated that he didn't trust what God had done and believed the serpent who said, "You will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Ge 3:5). Afterwards "God sent them out of the garden of Eden" (:23).

Paul says "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Ro 7:18). He states "no longer am I the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me" (:17). Sin reigns "in your mortal body" (6:12) and is a "body of death" (7:24). "The Scripture has shut up everyone under sin" (Gal 3:22) "making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" (Ro 7:23). The "pleasures of sin" (Heb 11:25) "easily entangles" (12:1) and sin can become "master over you" (Ro 6:14). It has "lusts" (:12) and "coveting of every kind" (7:8). You can be "led into" (2Co 11:29) and "caught in any trespass" (Gal 6:1). Then you can "be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13). Paul was acutely aware of sin. "Those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh" (Ro 8:5). "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (:8). He made it clear that it wasn't just his opinion of what sin is. In fact, even though "sin was in the world . . . [it was] not imputed" (5:13) before the law. "Apart from the Law sin is dead" (7:8). "I would not have come to know sin except through the Law" (:7). It was a "commandment, which was to result in life" (:10) by way of a "ministry . . . in letters engraved on stones" (2Co 3:7). "The Law came in so that the transgression would increase" (Ro 5:20). Therefore "the Law is spiritual" (7:14). This behavior is explained as man's "flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal 5:24). It could be said that man's human nature is physical, sensuous and earthy. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41). Man's flesh is but "a wind that passes and does not return" (Ps 78:39). "All flesh is

grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades" (Isa 40:6-7). He continues with "the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these" (Gal 5:19-21). "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9).

Came to Seek

Since man couldn't help himself God decided to solve the problem. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn 3:16) as a propitiation. He was "revealed" (1Ti 3:16) and sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Ro 8:3), "has come in the flesh" (1Jn 4:2), and was made "in the likeness of men" (Php 2:7) as a "descendant of David" (Ro 1:3). This was to demonstrate His righteousness" (Ro 3:24-25). John saw the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29). Jesus "will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Your sins will be "wiped away" (Ac 3:19). How is this accomplished? It is because "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3). He "was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification" (Ro 4:25). God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf" (2Co 5:21) and he was "offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28). "He died to sin once for all" (Ro 6:10) and "condemned sin in the flesh" (8:3). Jesus said "I

DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE', for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt 9:13). Christ gave "His life a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28) and therefore "in Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). You believe that he is the "propitiation for our sins" (1Jn 2:2). Therefore "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (6:11). We are "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2Co 4:10). Because of what Christ accomplished "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20). Paul said "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ in me" (:20). "Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Ro 8:10).

Paul noted in Romans 3 by quoting that "The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God" (Ps 14:2). Why does Christ seek the lost? It is because no one seeks on their own since "every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt" (Ps 53:3). Paul elaborates in Romans 10 by citing "I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me" (Isa 65:1). Paul asks "how shall they hear" (Ro 10:14) without anyone telling them? He also asks "surely they have never heard, have they?" (:17). But he affirms the promulgation of doctrine in

Romans 10 by quoting "their line has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world" (Isa 19:4). However Isaiah asks, "Who has believed our message?" (53:1). Paul then presents the caveat that "a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1Co 2:14). If you need the Spirit to comprehend scripture, but don't have the Spirit because you haven't experienced salvation, then it is a "catch-22" and you need a way to comprehend the gospel initially. Paul said he was "not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to every one who believes" (Ro 1:16). Scriptures "have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ" (Jn 20:31). It is "the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph 1:13) and the "living and enduring word of God" (1Pe 1:23). "All scripture is inspired by God" (2Ti 3:16) and "if any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God" (Jn 7:17). It is revelation by "faith which comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). The Greek word *rhema* defines it as the Living Word of God himself speaking. Jesus told Peter "'flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven'" (Mt 1:17).

Repentance

How would you answer a person who asked, "Why would I have to repent if I didn't sin like Adam?"

(Ro 5:14). Adam sinned because he broke God's commandment (Ge 2:17). He disobeyed (even rebelled) because he was not deceived (1Ti 2:14). Perhaps he ate the fruit Eve gave him because he just wanted to keep her happy. Maybe he rationalized that death would be only a temporary disciplinary action. It's possible he considered knowing more and becoming wiser would be worth it. "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). It's as though we, as descendants, have inherited the "original sin." Since "by a man came death" (1Co 5:21), through solidarity with Adam, "death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Ro 5:12). "Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant" (Hosea 6:7). Our guilt is imputed in a legal way as if a contract has been violated and a judgment has taken place because the ground has been cursed (Ge 3:17-18). This is the Adamic Covenant where Adam, as the representative of the human race, causes God to introduce physical death saying, "You [will] return to the ground, because from it you were taken" (:19). Others may say that Adam's nature became corrupted by the sin and that we inherit the corruption and sin automatically (Ro 5:19). Calvinists believe that we are incapable of being spiritually saved except for God's grace. So if you repent for these reasons you acknowledge that "through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous" (:19).

Repentance is therefore necessary. John the Baptist began preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of

heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:2). The purpose of it was "for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk 1:4). It is because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23). Then "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel'" (Mk 1:14-15). Paul said, "Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent" (Ac 17:30). Isaiah said to "turn from transgression" (Isa 59:20) and Ezekiel said to tell him to "turn from his wickedness or from his wicked way" (Eze 3:19). Paul said "the Lord will . . . bring to an end . . . the activity of Satan . . . with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth to be saved" (2Th 2:8-10). The disciples told Jesus about the Galileans who Pilate had killed. He replied, "'Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish'" (Lk 13:3). To perish means to die or be destroyed. God said to Ezekiel, "'Warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live'" (Eze 3:18). Jesus said, "'Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life'" (Jn 3:16). Also, "'I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish'" (10:28). The Lord is "patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). "Do you not think . . . that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" (Ro 2:4). "The sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation" (2Co 6:10). It is "repentance toward God" (Ac 20:21).

Restoration

God was the only one who could restore the relationship with man. He told the serpent he would "put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed" (Ge 3:15). Her seed (future offspring) was Christ which is why the word is capitalized. There was enmity because "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Ro 5:10). God said, "He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel" (Ge 3:15). God developed his plan through Abraham and told him "because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son" (22:16) "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (:18). Then "after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb 6:15). God told Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years" (Ge 15:13). God has everything in control and cites that "when Israel was a youth I loved him, and out of Egypt I called My son" (Hos 11:1). Jesus remained in Egypt "until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called My Son'" (Mt 2:15). God led Israel out of Egypt. Even then Hebrews explains that "the gospel was preached to us as well as to them" (Heb 4:2). Unfortunately God explains, "It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest"

(Ps 95:10). "There remains a rest for the people of God" (Heb 4:9). "But the word which they [Israel] heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it" (:2). "He who entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His" (:10).

God's plan was implemented via Israel. Paul reminds the Gentiles "that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2Co 5:19). His purpose was "through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col 1:20) which "put to death the enmity" (Eph 2:16). "He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach" (Col 1:22). He reconciled "both [Jew and Gentile] in one body to God through the cross" (Eph 2:16). Paul encourages "on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled to God" (2Co 5:20). "Having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Ro 5:10).

Redemption

To redeem means to get possession of something you don't own by paying for it. Perhaps ownership of something was lost and you want to regain it. There is the case where a man was "so poor

. . . as to sell himself" (Lev 25:47) as a slave. Fortunately "one of his brothers may redeem him" (:48) or "if he prospers, he may redeem himself" (:49). "If a ransom is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him" (Ex 21:30). In man's case we had been "severed from Christ" (Gal 5:4) and "alienated and hostile in mind" (Col 1:21). "God created man in His own image" (Ge 1:27). But now Adam had "a son in his own likeness" (5:3), and due to the fall of man, this image was not equivalent to the original likeness because man's relationship with God had deteriorated. Unfortunately man was caught in a "yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1) and "through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Heb 2:15). "We are slaves; yet in our bondage, [and] our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us" (Ez 9:9). "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). Christ had to accomplish this because "no man can by any means redeem his brother or give God a ransom for him--for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever" (Ps 4:7-8). Redemption means to buy back by making payment, and in man's predicament, it pertains to freeing him from his bondage to sin. Therefore Jesus explained, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). The payment of a ransom applies to a loosing or setting someone free, and by this, the Father through Christ is regaining possession of something that originally was his as a

"redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). It is "the church of God which He purchases with His own blood" (Ac 20:28). "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). Christ "gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:5) since "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2Co 5:19). Someone once told me that it means everyone automatically goes to heaven. But you must appropriate what Christ has done to make it personally official.

Christ "cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us; and . . . nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). However, "the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness" (1Co 1:18). But it is serious and not just academic. Christ "redeemed us . . . having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) by his crucifixion. It was from "the curse of the Law" (:13) for "forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph 1:7). It is "redemption [for] the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14) and "transgressions that were committed under the first covenant" (Heb 9:15). It was to redeem us "from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers" (1Pe 1:18) and "from every lawless deed . . . [to be] zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). He "rescued us from the domain of darkness" (:13) and "from the hand of our enemies" (Lk 1:74). It was a "testimony given at the proper time" (1Ti 2:6) and "displayed publicly as an atonement in His blood through faith" (Ro 3:25). "Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood"" (1Co 11:25) "poured out for many" (Mk 14:24). Redemption has numerous

important objectives. One result is that we are "justified as a gift by His grace" (Ro 3:24). It is so "we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal 4:5) and to "receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). We have "the first fruits of the Spirit" (Ro 8:23) and are "sealed" (Eph 4:30) by the Holy Spirit. Christ to us becomes "wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification" (1Co 1:30). Through Christ we "are believers in God . . . so that your faith and hope are in God" (1Pe 1:21). "Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all" (Heb 9:12) having "purchased for God . . . men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). "Do you not know . . . that you are not your own?" (1Co 6:19,20). "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men" (7:23).

Eternal Life

The first message that John the Baptist and Jesus preached was "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 4:17). Then early in Jesus' ministry he had a conversation with "Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews" (Jn 3:1). Jesus revealed, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (:5). Some people say that unless you aren't water baptized you don't qualify, but Jesus is stating a principle and not creating a checklist based upon works. Nicodemus didn't understand so Jesus responded, "Are you a teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?"

(:10). The Jews had the Old Testament scriptures and were supposed to understand spiritual things. Jesus observed, "You do not believe [earthly things] so how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (:11). Then he proceeded to say "whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (:16). I've heard people say that its difficult to grasp the concept of eternity much less living forever. The translation of Melchizedik's name is "king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem" (Heb 7:2). "Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he abides a priest perpetually" (:3). "His name will be called . . . Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (Isa 9:6). "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (Jn 1:1). He is "the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father" (:18). He said to the Father, "You loved Me before the foundation of the world" (17:24). Jesus said it was "the glory which I had with You before the world was" (:5). This was before the Creation. "He is before all things" (Col 1:7). Jesus has "neither beginning of days nor end of life" (Heb 7:3). He says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Rev 22:13). He is "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8). "I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am" (Jn 8:58). "In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col 2:9). This relationship

is cited as having been predicted by a prophet regarding a Messiah being born in Bethlehem (Mt 2:4). The facts are scripturally correlated. The scriptures are "God-breathed" (2Ti 3:16) as the Spirit "carried along" (2Pe 1:21) the writers. What is written about Jesus is from the Spirit. God "has testified concerning His Son" (1Jn 5:9). Jesus said the Holy Spirit would "teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you" (Jn 14:26 NIV). That is why they had knowledge impossible to know otherwise. Jesus was "in the beginning with God" (1:2). "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (:3). "'You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands'" (Heb 1:10). "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible" (Col 1:16). "The world was made through Him" (Jn 1:10). It is He "for whom are all things, and through whom are all things" (Heb 2:10).

To understand Biblical doctrine you must comprehend what the Bible says. It may sound like a circular argument but its possible to be "handling accurately the word of truth" (2Ti 2:15). God gave the Bible's authors accurate information because "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2Pe 1:21). How do you understand the concept of eternal life? Eternity depends on God. God says, "'I am God. Even from eternity I am He'" (Isa 43:12-13). "'His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity'" (Mic

5:2). "You are from everlasting" (Ps 93:2). "Are You not from everlasting?" (Hab 1:12). Furthermore, "I live forever" (Dt 32:40). "From everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Ps 90:2). "Your years will not come to an end" (Ps 102:27). "The Lord shall reign forever and ever" (Ex 15:18). He saved Israel "with an everlasting salvation . . . to all eternity" (Isa 45:17). "His ways are everlasting" (Hab 3:6). This "momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2Co 4:17). It depends upon your perspective. "Things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Co 4:18). "The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:8). "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2Co 5:1). The "free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (5:11). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). Christ "died for sins once for all" (1Pe 3:18). "Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9). Therefore "he who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life" (Jn 3:36). Jesus cautioned the Jews, "You think that in [the Scriptures] you have eternal life . . . [but] you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life" (5:39-40).

Saved by Grace

There is a second kind of birth. Jesus said "no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (Jn 3:5-6). This is possible whereby "all of us who were baptized into Christ" (Ro 6:3) were "all baptized by one Spirit" (1Co 12:13). Therefore "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2Co 5:17). Furthermore Jesus will "baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mt 3:11). "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (Ro 8:9). It is not God's will that anyone should perish (Mt 18:14). The gospel is "the power of God to salvation" (Ro 1:16). To keep from perishing, the gospel provides "a righteousness that is by faith . . . [so that] the righteous will live by faith" (:17). The theme of Romans is justification by faith. No one lacks faith because it "comes by hearing" (10:17). "What may be known about God is plain because God has made it plain" (1:19 NIV). The truth (:18) is more accurately defined in verse 25 as the "truth about God." The truth is "known" (:19,;21), "seen, understood" (:20), "knowledge" (:28), and "knowing" (:32). "What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them" (:19 NKJV). "Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities . . . have been clearly seen" (:20). They include his eternal power and deity.

God is "clearly seen" (Ro 1:20) and "they knew God" (:21). "God made it evident to them . . . since the creation of the world" (:19-20). They saw "His invisible

attributes . . . through what has been made so that they are without excuse" (:20). This includes "His eternal power and divine nature" (:20). This revelation is "faith [which] comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (10:17). In Greek it is "rhema" which means the "Living Word" or God himself speaking. It would "show the work of the Law written in their hearts" (2:15). "God made it evident to them" (1:19) and since it was "within them" (:19) "the word is . . . in your heart" (10:8). God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (12:3). Even Paul recognized that he "received [his revelation] from the Lord" (1Co 11:23) and he "received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal 1:12). This was "the word of faith which we are preaching" (10:8). Therefore "believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (10:9). How do you hear with your heart? "If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him" (Rev 3:20). Communication is "inspired by God" (2Ti 3:16). "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit" (Ro 8:16). When Peter heard, Jesus said, "flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Mt 16:17). It is by "faith which comes through Him" (Ac 3:16). "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8-9).

Heaven or Hell?

They didn't apply their knowledge since "they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks" (Ro 1:21). It

was a deliberate decision because "they did not see fit to acknowledge God" (:28). They "suppress the truth" (:18). They "exchanged the glory" (:23) and "the truth of God for a lie" (:25). In their pride they claimed "to be wise" (:22) and "worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator" (:25). By their behavior they sealed their own fate. When they "became futile in their speculations" (:21) it gave "birth to sin . . . [which] brings forth death (Jas 1:15). Therefore God "gave them over" (Ro 1:24, 26, 28) to the desires of their hearts. "Their foolish heart was darkened" (:21) in the form of "impurity" (:24) and "degrading passions" (:26) which are acts of sexual indecency. They received "in their own persons the due penalty of their error" (:27). Finally "God gave them over to a depraved mind" (:28) and worse things happened.

What do you think the destiny of those who "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro 1:18), "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (:25), and "do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness" (2:8) will be? There will be "wrath and indignation . . . tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil" (:8-9). You take the wrong direction when you don't "honor Him as God or give thanks" (1:21). When you claim "to be wise" (:22) yourself and do "not see fit to acknowledge God any longer" (:28) you become "selfishly ambitious" (2:8). You serve instead "the creature rather than the Creator" (1:25) and your "heart was darkened" (:21). "You are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of . . . the righteous judgment of

God" (2:5). Your "end will be according to their deeds" (2Co 11:15). But if you go the right direction there will be "glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good" (Ro 2:10). If you don't "hold fast . . . until the end" (Heb 3: 6) then you won't be saved.

Having the truth is crucial since "they perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved" (2Th 2:10). They "suppress the truth by their wickedness" (Ro 1:18). The knowledge of God was accessible but people closed their minds to it. "They did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God" (:28). The truth of God has been "clearly seen . . . [and] men are without excuse" (:20). It is a matter of what one decides in his mind. "Their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened" (:21). They didn't glorify God or give thanks (:21) and then "claimed to be wise" (:22). "God sent them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (2Th 2:11). "Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts" (Ro 1:26). God had protected them before. But "since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over [again] to a depraved mind" (:28). "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Pr 23:7)

The Transgression

When God put Adam in the Garden of Eden he "commanded the man" (Ge 2:16) "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the

day that you eat from it you will surely die" (:17). However, Adam violated the command. "Through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). The result was "through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (:12). Then "death spread to all men" (:12) because "in Adam all die" (1Co 15:22). Sin is the culprit because "the sting of death is sin" (1Co 15:56). "The wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23). Therefore "sin reigned in death" (5:21) and "death reigned" (:17). "Death works in us" (2Co 4:12). "They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds" (Ps 14:1). "They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one" (:3). But even though "the wise man and the fool alike die" (Eccl 2:16), you should consider "him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14). There was a "certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us" (Col 2:14).

Jesus told them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin" (Jn 8:34). Being a slave means you are not free as Israel was in "the house of slavery" (Ex 13:13) in Egypt. It has a more serious meaning because the devil has "the power of death" (Heb 2:14). At the judgment "death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:14). But before that people were under "the power of Sheol" (Ps 49:15) which resulted in "going to the pit" (Job 33:28). Therefore, you have to be rescued in order to be free. But "No man can by any means redeem his brother or give God a ransom for him--for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever" (Ps 49:7-8).

Just and Justifier

We know that "the wages of sin is death" (Ro 6:23) because "the soul who sins will die" (Eze 18:4). It is a fact of life as Paul said he served "the law of sin which is in my members" (Ro 7:23). We are "sold into bondage to sin" (:14). You can yield yourself to serve "sin resulting in death" (6:16). When Adam and Eve sinned they were driven from the Garden of Eden (Ge 3:24) and lost their relationship with God. Consequently God developed a plan to reconcile humanity back to himself. However, there is the issue of the sin and guilt of humanity. The "curse of the Law" (Gal 3:13) convicts us and there is a "certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us" (Col 2:14). We are "delivered . . . into the power of our iniquities" (Isa 64:7). Job revealed that God would "'bring [man] into judgment with Yourself. Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one!" (Job 14:3-4). Furthermore, man cannot extradite himself "since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal 2:16). That is why Jesus stated, "'The Son of Man has come to save that which was lost'" (Mt 18:11) and to rescue "those who are perishing" (2Co 4:3). "While we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (Ro 5:6). "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (:8).

But God is just and his wrath must be appeased. "'I will not acquit the guilty'" (Ex 23:7). "He will by no means clear the guilty" (Nu 14:18). In other words, in his mercy he will not just unilaterally let humanity off the hook. "Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no man living is righteous" (Ps 143:2). "If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (130:3). To acquit would be to

pronounce a party not guilty. Therefore he must "be just and the justifier" (Ro 3:26). He is the one who "justifies the ungodly" (4:5). To be justified is a forensic term meaning to be justly treated or to be vindicated which is to exonerate. It is a judicial act whereby all the claims of the law are completely satisfied. It is a judicial process where the judges "justify the righteous and condemn the wicked" (Dt 25:1) which renders a verdict. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?" (Ge 18:25). "The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether" (19:9).

Nature of Sin

What is sin whose sins we are guilty of? A good way to delineate it is to describe its effects. Paul explained it saying "if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin that dwells in me" (Ro 7:20). He said that we indulge "the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath" (Eph 2:3). The source or reality of it is in man's nature. David said, "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me" (Ps 51:5). A more direct revelation from Paul is that it is "the principle that evil is present in me" (Ro 7:21). "Sin [evil] was in the world" (5:13).

Many people define the original sin as being "through the one man's [Adam's] disobedience the many were made sinners" (Ro 5:19). "Death spread to all men, because all sinned" (:12). That sin is explained in Romans 5:18 by the NASB as "through one transgression", the NIV "as the result of one trespass", and the NKJV "by the offence of one." An offence is a violation involving a breaking of a law or rule as with

"the offence of Adam" (:14). It is "iniquity . . . in sin" (Ps 51:5) as "disobedience" (Ro 5:19). That "the many were made sinners" (:19) is explained by the Greek word *kathistemi* meaning that one is appointed to a position designating that he hasn't specifically qualified himself for it. That is why you received the guilty status even though you "had not sinned in the likeness" (:14) of Adam.

Consequently "there resulted condemnation of all men" (Ro 5:18 NASB) and "judgment came upon all men to condemnation" (:18 NKJV). Condemnation means that a penalty has been assessed as a judgment in that Adam was told he would "surely die" (Ge 2:17) which is equivalent to a death penalty. "The Lord God commanded the man, saying . . . 'from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die'" (:17). However, the serpent tempted Eve asking, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" (3:1). How did he know this? He was there "from the beginning" (Jn 8:44). Then he lied saying, "'You will not surely die'" (Ge 3:4). Jesus said, "'Whenever he [the devil] speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies'" (Jn 8:44).

Condemned Sin

The right of redemption was a tenet in Old Testament Jewish law. Inheritance of land was a practice in their society. But it's possible an owner would come upon hard times and have to sell his property. However, "his nearest relative is to come and buy back what his relative has sold" (Lev 25:25).

Another situation might be that a person comes into poverty and has to sell himself into slavery to survive. But in this case also "he shall have redemption right after he has been sold: (:47). Fortunately the law specifies that "one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him" (:49). An Old Testament word for it is "gaal" which means to free by means of a price paid. Another legal term is "padah" which means to deliver or rescue. The nearest relative is called the kinsman-redeemer who is responsible for protecting the interests of needy members of the extended family. The price paid for redemption is called the ransom. Christ came "to give His life a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). He is the "one mediator also between God and man . . . who gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:5-6). Many believed that Jesus was the one prophesied to redeem Israel, which at that moment, would be their subjugation to Rome. In the temple Anna "continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38). On the road to Emmaus two men confessed, "We were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (24:21).

In the garden of Eden God told Adam, "From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for . . . you shall surely die" (Ge 2:17). Consequently, "through fear of death [they] were subject to slavery all their lives" (Heb 2:15). Since that is the case then "one of his brothers may redeem him" (Lev 25:48). However, "No man can by any means redeem his brother or give God a ransom for him" (Ps 49:7). "No one is justified by the Law before God" (Gal 3:11). Therefore, God had to take the initiative "who reconciled us to Himself through Christ" (2Co 5:18). It

was "with a view to the redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). God made a way for mankind who he created to be reclaimed. "The grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men" (Titus 2:11). "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). He was "offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28). "He died to sin once for all" (Ro 6:10) and "condemned sin in the flesh" (8:30). "He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). Therefore "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Ro 6:11). Even though you have been delivered from slavery to sin "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). I now "live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (:20).

Forgiveness of Sins

If someone offends you he usually gets blamed for the consequences. You can hold it against him which tends to drag you down. But if that person says he is sorry you should forgive him. For serious crimes many people never forgive the offender. However, Christians tend to follow the Bible's teaching and forgive the perpetrator. "'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution'" (Dt 32:35). How does God forgive our sins? Zecharias prophesied concerning this (Lk 1:67) saying that you become aware of "the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of sins" (:77). Jesus "will save [i.e. salvation] His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). It starts with "repentance for forgiveness of sins" (Lk 24:47). Then, "'I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember more'" (Jer 31:34). Sin had to be destroyed and the sins produced by it had to be accounted for.

"Your sins will be wiped away" (Ac 3:19). John saw the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29). Does that mean that the world's slate is wiped clean and that's the end of it? The only way forgiveness can be received is if God's work is appropriated. Sins are committed in the flesh, so at the basic level, God had to "put to death the enmity" (Eph 2:16) and "condemned sin in the flesh" (Ro 8:3). It was done so "the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (6:6).

How is this accomplished? It is because "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3). He "was delivered over because of our transgressions" (Ro 4:25). Jesus said, "'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE', for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mt 9:13). "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). He gave "His life a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28). He was "offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28). He "gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:6). It results in "the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph 1:7). He is the "propitiation for our sins" (1Jn 2:2).

The Savior

Then John recognized Jesus saying, "'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (Jn 1:29). "The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1Jn 4:14). "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (1Co 5:21). He "was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification" (Ro 4:25). He was

"offered once to bear the sins of many" (Heb 9:28). "He died to sin once for all" (Ro 6:10) and "condemned sin in the flesh" (8:3).

It was "through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death" (Heb 2:14). He "canceled out the certificate of death" (Col 2:14). "The Root of David, has overcome" (Rev 5:5). "God will redeem my soul from the power of Sheol" (Ps 49:15). "He has redeemed my soul from going to the pit, and my life shall see the light" (Job 33:28). Jesus said, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of death and Hades" (Rev 1:18). "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph 1:7). Therefore, "consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Ro 6:11). "We have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men" (1Ti 4:10).

The Redeemer

Abram's father was taking his family to Canaan from Ur but then he died. Next, God spoke to Abram and directed him to continue alone with his family to a place he would be shown. If he was obedient he would receive certain promises from God (Ge 12:2-3), When they arrived in Canaan the "Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land" (:7). "Then he believed in the Lord, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (15:6). It was God "who redeemed Abraham" (Isa 29:22). In Christ "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14). God initiated the process of redemption saying to the serpent regarding their descendants, "He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel"

(Ge 3:15). But Satan as "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving" (2Co 4:4). "The whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1Jn 5:19). Therefore, mankind was in bondage to sin. But "whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith" (:4). God continued to carry out his plan saying to Israel, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Ex 6:6). "The Lord has ransomed Jacob and redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he" (Jer 31:11). "You have by Your power redeemed Your people" (Ps 77:15) "which You have purchased of old, which You have redeemed to be the tribe of Your inheritance" (74:2). "Because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers . . . [He] redeemed you from the house of slavery" (Dt 7:8). Isaiah prophesied by way of "the Redeemer of Israel" (Isa 49:7) that Christ would be "the Servant of rulers" (:7) and "will have compassion on you" (54:8). "A Redeemer will come to Zion" (59:20) and "He will redeem Israel" (Ps 130:8). Job foresaw the future saying, "As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth" (Job 19:25). "Then you will know that I, the Lord, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob" (Isa 60:16). "All flesh will know" (49:26).

At the Cross

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2Co 5:19) "having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col 1:20). It was a "testimony given at the proper time" (1Ti 2:6) and "displayed publicly as an atonement in His blood through faith" (Ro 3:25). "We

have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph 1:7). "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). He "released us from our sins by His blood" (Rev 1:5). "You were not redeemed with perishable things. . . but with precious blood" (1Pe 1:19). Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (1Co 11:25) "poured out for many" (Mk 14:24). "Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12). It is "the church of God which He purchases with His own blood" (Ac 20:28). "They overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony" (Rev 12:11).

Christ's sacrifice was prophesied in the Old Testament. "He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening of our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed" (Isa 53:5). "He would render Himself as a guilt offering" (:10). The Tabernacle of Moses was a picture of Christ's work. "He shall present his offering to the Lord . . . one ewe-lamb a year old without defect for a sin offering" (Nu 6:14). Also, the priest was to "offer to the Lord a bull without defect as a sin offering" (Lev 4:3) and then "dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the Lord" (:6). Being without defect guaranteed that the death it died was not its own. Jesus was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15). "He had done no violence nor was there any deceit in His mouth" (Isa 53:9).

"He has taken it [sin] out of the way, having nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). "The word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness" (1Co 1:18). Christ

"redeemed us . . . having become a curse for us-for it is written, 'Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree'" (Gal 3:13). "We know that our old self was crucified with him . . . that we should no longer be slaves to sin" (Ro 6:6). "He who has died is freed from sin" (:7). Paul said "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ in me" (Gal 2:20). We know that in actuality "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3) and "died to sin once for all" (Ro 6:10). We identify with Christ's actual sacrifice in a spiritual way, but it becomes real in our lives. "Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Ro 8:10). We are "always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body" (2Co 4:10). "Consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Ro 6:11). "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20).

Became Sin

His "death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions" (Heb 9:15). Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God" (:14). He offered "Himself as a guilt offering" (Isa 53:10). This was prophetic as when "the blood of goats and bulls" (Heb 9:13) was sprinkled on "those who have been defiled, [to] sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh" (:13). "One may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood" (:22). These were the "transgressions that were committed under the first covenant" (:15) which "was not inaugurated without blood" (:18). Moses explained it as "according to the Law" (:19) as "'the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you'" (Ex

24:8). "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! "How blessed is the man whom the Lord does not impute iniquity" (Ps 32:1-2). Then Jesus cited, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (1Co 11:25). "Where a covenant is, there must be the death of the one who made it" (Heb 9:16). When a person writes a will he must die before the executor can lawfully distribute to the beneficiaries. "A covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives" (:17).

God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). He "committed no sin" (1Pe 2:22) so how could he become sin? He was "made . . . to be sin" (2Co 5:21) because he was, in terms of a figure of speech, a sinless substitute as a sin offering "on our behalf" (:21). Mankind was already experiencing the penalty of death and was separated from God. In order to take on the burden of humanity's transgressions he had to bear the fate of sinners and experience those consequences. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) and was therefore treated as though he was a sinner. Because he was sinless it was obvious he wasn't dying his own death per se but was a substitute for the sinner who was guilty and couldn't save himself. At the cross "when the sixth hour had come, darkness fell over the whole land" (Mk 15:33) which symbolizes God's turning away from the Son whom he had made "to be sin" (2Co 15:21). This is reflected in Jesus' voicing, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (:34). The sin debt "was hostile to us" (Col 2:14) and he "nailed it to the cross" (:14). Because Christ had become sin you'd think it had also died. However, "He has taken it

out of the way" (:14) which explains why sin is still in the world. What it means is that it made a way to be "raised because of our justification" (Ro 4:25) so "we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21).

Sent in Likeness

God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Ro 8:3) "who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). What is the likeness of sinful man? "The first man is from the earth, earthly" (1Co 15:47) and "so also are those [we] who are earthy" (:48). Physically it is heredity and DNA. Psychologically it is how you are raised, and as some presume, you become the product of the sum total of your experiences. Man is composed of "spirit and soul and body" (1Th 5:23). "The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground" (Ge 2:7) which is the body. The brain is a physical organ and we make decisions with our intellect. But you "believe in your heart" (Ro 10:9) which is from another capacity. That source is from when God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Ge 2:7). Job said the "Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). You could limit God's creation if you only considered Solomon saying "they all have the same breath" (Ecc 3:19) or Isaiah stating, "Stop regarding man, whose breath of life is in his nostrils" (Isa 2:22). But a distinction is made by Solomon saying, "Who knows that the breath of man ascends upward and the breath of the beast descends downward to the earth?" (Ecc 3:22). He says "man goes to his eternal home" (12:5) and "the dust will

return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (:7). Zechariah states that it is the Lord who "forms the spirit of man within him" (Zec 12:1). He is the "Father of spirits" (Heb 12:9). Moses referred to the Lord as "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num 27:16).

God made man in the image and likeness of God (Ge 1:26). He "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (2:7). Hebrew for "breath" means breath, wind, or spirit. "God is spirit" (Jn 4:24) and he communicates with man. Jesus "became a life-giving spirit" (1Co 15:45) and "breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (Jn 20:22). "With the heart a person believes" (Ro 10:10) which is the "inner man" (Eph 3:16). It applies to "the hidden person of the heart" (1Pe 3:4) or "inner man" (Ro 7:22). You become a new person "inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit" (Ro 2:29). "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn 3:6). Then "our inner man is being renewed day by day" (2Co 4:16). But since Christ was born as we are, wouldn't he become subject to the same fleshly drives? The difference is that "Christ is born of God" (1Jn 5:1). On the surface, as a man, it would appear that he possessed a sinful nature like everyone else, but he was sinless "for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col 2:9).

The Gospel

In several of Paul's letters he expresses the greeting, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 1:2) representing two members of the three-person Deity. "God created the

heavens and the earth" (Ge 1:1) and "the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters" (:2). "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image'" (:26). The Father alone is not the "first cause" as Greek philosophy might argue. But Jesus was sent by the Father because he said his desire was "'to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work'" (Jn 4:34). Also Jesus explained that when the Holy Spirit arrives, "'He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak'" (Jn 16:13). Then Paul explains that at the finish "comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father" (1Co 15:24).

Paul told the Colossians he had "heard of your faith in Christ Jesus" (Col 1:4) that they had "heard in the word of truth, the gospel" (:5) in which they "understood the grace of God in truth" (:6). It is "the hope of the gospel that you have heard" (:23). Paul told the Romans he was "not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation" (Ro 1:16) because "in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (:17). He was sent to "preach the gospel" (1Co 1:17) "by which you are saved" (15:2). "The word of the cross is . . . to us who are being saved . . . the power of God" (1:18). "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2Co 5:19). They comprehended "the grace of God in truth" (Col 1:6) which means that they fully and experientially knew. Jesus "was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1) and "the Word became flesh . . . and we beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth" (:14). Jesus prayed, "'Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth'" (Jn 17:17). It is "the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but

has now been manifested" (Col 1:26) "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (:27).

Spiritual vs. Carnal

Paul confessed "I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin" (Ro 7:14 NASB). "I am carnal, sold under sin" (:14 NKJV). "I am unspiritual, sold as a slave under sin" (:14 NIV). Some Corinthians were in the same predicament. He told them "I could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh" (1Co 3:1). That is not a good prognosis because "the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so" (Ro 8:7). You would think that carnality and spirituality were mutually exclusive. In the first case, Paul told the Colossians that "you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds" (Col 1:21). But in the second he reminded the Corinthians that "you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Ro 8:9). "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (:9). "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come" (2Co 5:17).

Paul said "the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh" (Ro 7:14) whereas the NIV translates "I am unspiritual" (:14). But he says "you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit" (8:9). Is this a contradiction in terms? He says "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is in my flesh" (7:18) whereas the NIV calls it the "sinful nature" (:18). Is everything the natural man does unspiritual? Consider "when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law . . . they show the

work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness" (2:14). People are born with a conscience so aren't necessarily fleshly and sinful all the time. A major commandment is to "love the Lord with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind" (Lk 10:27). You are composed of "spirit and soul and body" (1Th 5:23). The body and soul are individual components because God "is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). The spirit and soul are separate because there is a "division of soul and spirit" (Heb 4:12). Also the soul and heart are individual parts because they "were of one heart and soul" (Ac 4:32). Paul explains there is "the law of God in the inner man" (Ro 7:22). Then he sees "a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members" (:23). If the body wars against the mind (thinking etc.) how can this be so if the head is part of the body? It's because the reference is to the "law of the mind" (:23) whereby "with my mind [I] am serving the law of God" (:25) which is "the law of the Spirit of life" (8:2). But he describes a problem that "I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (7:18 NIV). It is because the "sin living in me does it" (:18 NIV). The reason that "I practice the very evil that I do not wish" (:19) is due to "the principle that evil is present in me" (:21). This is not easy to understand. God had originally said, "From the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die" (Ge 2:17). Paul asked, "Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Ro 7:24). He responds, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (:25).

Rightness

The Bible did not (speaking with "tongue in cheek") invent the term "righteousness." A commentator cites a Mesopotamian word based on a river reed being used as a ruler to measure if walls were straight. This would be an absolute standard. But when it comes to the expectations of a society, the standards could vary from culture to culture. At a higher philosophical level you might consider the relative humanist who could say that expectations change to whatever currently works, which would mean that there was only a relative standard. If you consider the evolutionist he might conclude that whatever is necessary to survive is the standard, whereby expectations would vary according to circumstances. One source cited that Greek writing treated righteousness as someone who conformed to the expectations of deity and society. In the Bible it relates to the Hebrew word "tsedeq" and the Greek root "dikaio." All the relevant words are used in various ways so that translators had to select the correct English word for the appropriate context. In the former it would mean "rightness." It would refer to a state of being such as being right as opposed to being wrong. It would be an attribute of a person having a state of integrity relative to God's standards or the expectations of society. God implemented a practical application of his character when he chose Israel and called Jerusalem the "city of righteousness, a faithful city" (Isa 1:26). "He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness" (33:5). "They will call you the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (60:14). It was a unilateral purpose of God because "It is not for your righteousness or for the uprightness of your heart" (Dt

9:5) that "God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stubborn people" (:6).

Righteousness becomes meaningful when there are relationships involved. They can be nurturing or destructive. Relations exist between family members, friends, fellow citizens and foreigners. They are expressed through conversation and behavior. Righteousness is the glue that holds families and society together. "Sow with a view to righteousness. Reap in accordance with kindness" (Hos 10:12). In Israel the "saddiq" was a wise person who got "wisdom . . . [and then] the father of the righteous" (Prv 23:23-24) greatly rejoiced. The Hebrew word "sedeq" refers to an action which conforms to a norm. There is ethical conduct expressed by, "You shall have just balances [and] just weights" (Lev 19:36). In context, the word "justice" is derived from the same source as "righteousness." "You shall appoint for yourself judges . . . and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment" (Dt 16:18). "If a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness" (Eze 18:5) he "executes true justice between man and man" (:8). "Give the king Your judgments, O God . . . [that he may] judge Your people with righteousness and Your afflicted with justice" (Ps 72:1). God called Israel beginning with Abraham but then had to supply them with the Law so they would have a revelation of how to conduct themselves. The king was God's appointed theocratic ruler and was to be obedient to God's leading. David advised Solomon, "Keep the charge of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of

Moses, that you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn" (1Ki 2:3).

Righteousness

Paul uses the Greek word *dikaioσύνη* meaning righteousness over one hundred times in the New Testament. He applies it in a covenantal context in terms of God's promise and man's response which establishes a relationship. God "made a covenant with him [Abraham] to give him the land of the Canaanite . . . [and] to give it to his descendants" (Neh 9:8). Nehemiah states, "You [God] found his [Abraham's] heart faithful before You" (:7) and "You have fulfilled Your promise, for You are righteous" (:8). God's initiative was necessary because of Adam's disobedience. God had "commanded" (Ge 2:16) him "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat" (:17). But when they disobeyed, it came to pass that they "shall surely die" (:17) and "the Lord God sent him out from the garden" (3:23) and man was disenfranchised from God and unable to reestablish the relationship. Therefore, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). "This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed" (3:25). "He will judge the world in righteousness . . . having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Ac 17:31) "so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Ro 8:11). "Who has announced this from old? .

. . . Is it not I, the Lord?" (Isa 45:21). "And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a savior; there is none except Me" (:21). "This is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness'" (Jer 23:6). Let "salvation bear fruit and righteousness spring up from it. I, the Lord, have created it" (Isa 45:8). "My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples" (51:5). The phrase with God's arms anthropomorphically ascribes human attributes to deity. "He has clothed me with garments of salvation [and] wrapped me with a robe of righteousness" (61:10).

Abraham "believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Ge 15:6). God credited his own righteousness to Abraham's account as Paul observed "not having a righteousness of my own . . . [but] the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Php 3:9). "In it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Ro 1:17). It is for "the man whom God credits righteousness apart from works" (4:6). God chose Abraham "so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" (Ge 18:19) and God kept his promise "because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws" (26:5). But the disobedient do "not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Ro 10:3), "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1Co 1:30). God proceeded to deliver Israel from Egypt "so that you might know the righteous acts of the Lord" (Mic 6:5). It is "He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among

you" (Gal 3:5). "The Lord performs righteous deeds and judgments for all who are oppressed" (Ps 103:6). "The Lord is righteous within her; He will do no injustice" (Zep 3:5). "His work is perfect, for all His ways are just" (Dt 32:4). They "humbled themselves and said, 'The Lord is righteous'" (2Ch 12:6). "They shall recount the righteous deeds of the Lord" (Jdg 5:11). Christ will establish his kingdom "with justice and righteousness. . . [via] the zeal of the Lord of hosts" (Isa 9:7) because "'the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness'" (45:23) and "'My righteousness will be forever'" (51:8).

Paths of Righteousness

A covenant is a two-way street. "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic 6:8). "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God" (Ge 6:9). "To do righteousness and justice is desired by the Lord more than sacrifice" (Prv 21:3). Sacrifice is acceptable to someone when he deems the loss of something okay when the end justifies the means since "every man's way is right in his own eyes" (:2). "Preserve justice and do righteousness" (Isa 56:1). "'Only justice, you shall pursue, that you may live and possess the land which the Lord your God is giving you'" (Ge 6:9). "'If a man is righteous and practices justice and righteousness'" (Eze 18:5) he "'will surely live,' declares the Lord God" (:9). "The righteous will live by his faith" (Hab 2:4). David told Solomon, "'Keep the charge of the Lord your God . . . that you may succeed in all that you do'" (1Ki 2:3). Paul told them to "pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness" (1Ti 6:11). "I walk in the

way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice" (Prv 8:20). "Righteousness guards the one whose way is blameless" (13:6). "Righteous lips are the delight of kings" (16:13). The key is to "present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification" (Ro 6:19). "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Mt 6:33). "He who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (7:21) "will enter the kingdom of heaven" (:21). "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven" (5:20). "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:25).

On the other side of the coin, "If only you paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river" (Isa 48:18). "They went far from Me and walked after emptiness" (Jer 2:5). "The righteous God tries the hearts and minds" (Ps 7:9). "God is a righteous judge" (:11) and "upright are Your judgments" (119:137). There is "the indictment of the Lord . . . because the Lord has a case against His people" (Mic 6:2). "Therefore the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on us; for the Lord our God is righteous with respect to all His deeds" (Da 9:14). "The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish" (Ps 1:6). The benefits are that "He restores my soul; [and] He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake" (23:3).

Christ in You

"Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness" (Ro 4:9) and "the righteous is saved" (1Pe 4:18) because "God is the one who justifies" (Ro 8:33).

Therefore, your "spirit is alive because of righteousness" (:10). You receive "life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit" (:11). It is the "free gift of God [which] is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (6:23). "Because of His great love with which He loved us . . . [he] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Eph 1:4-5). "He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (Col 1:13). God did not just throw a switch or make a proclamation. It is accomplished by "He who raised Jesus Christ from the dead . . . who indwells you" (Ro 8:11). It requires the same means by which Christ "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead" (1:4). But it will not happen unless the "Spirit of God dwells in you . . . [for] if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (8:9). "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life" (Jn 3:36). Paul was "not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God to everyone who believes" (Ro 1:16). Paul had made known to them "the gospel . . . which also you received, in which you also stand" (1Co 15:1) and emphasized the important aspects twice saying they were "according to the Scriptures" (:3,4). It happens "after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph 1:13). It is "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (Ro 3:22). "With the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (10:10). "In hope we have been saved" (8:24). "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered" (Joel 2:32) which is equivalent to "will be saved" (Ro 10:13).

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro 8:1). "Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (1Co 3:16). "If Christ is in you" (Ro 8:10) you are "in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (:9). It is "this mystery . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). Paul recommends to "test yourselves to see if you are in the faith . . . that Jesus Christ is in you" (2Co 13:5). "You were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance" (Eph 1:13-14). Consequently, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free" (Ro 8:2). We now "do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (:4). Walking is a step-by-step process and we are being "led by the Spirit of God" (:14). One person explains this as being "practically actuated" and another says it is "progressive sanctification." "The Spirit also helps our weaknesses; for we do not know how to pray as we should" (:26). Also, "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (:16). The process proceeds as "if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (:13). "The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (:6). You are "raised up with Christ" (Col 3:1) and "your life is hidden with Christ in God" (:3). Therefore "keep seeking the things above" (:1) and "'seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you'" (Mt 6:33). Furthermore, "when Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with Him in glory" (Col 3:4). "We eagerly wait for a Savior . . . who will transform the body of our humble state into the body of His glory" (Php 3:20-21). "It has not appeared as yet what we shall be . . . [for] when He appears, we shall be like Him" (1Jn 3:2).

Consecration

There are many hundreds of religions in the world. Some claim that God told their founders proprietary truths, and they were then written down in official books for their religion. The ideas from different religions often conflict with each other denoting either that God has come up with a large offering of variety, or that a number of ideas are actually wrong. In Christianity the Holy Spirit can reveal to you what is truth and what is not. However, religions' adherents tend "religiously" to defend their doctrine. It seems that their minds are made up. The mind is where thinking occurs. It can be analytical making sense of the input it gets, or imaginative creating original thoughts. It is a tool which helps determine whether something is true or false. But it doesn't inherently know everything, so processes like the scientific method may have to be implemented. The conscience can determine whether something is right or wrong but it doesn't necessarily depend on the logical mind for this.

Paul explained "you are slaves of the one whom you obey . . . [such as] sin resulting in death" (Ro 6:16). But now you "present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification" (:19). "The outcome [results in] eternal life" (:22). God "is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Ac 20:32). "You were washed, . . . sanctified . . . [and] justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11). These facets are a package deal representing instantaneous regeneration and are not phases of a long, drawn out process. "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through

sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth" (2Th 2:13). Christ "became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1Co 1:30). He accomplished this "having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time" (Heb 10:12) and "has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (:14).

"This is the will of God, your sanctification" (1Th 4:3). The Hebrew word *qadash* means to be set apart, holy, or consecrated. The Greek word *hagiazō* means to make holy, purify, or dedicate. Christians are "beloved of God . . . called as saints" (Ro 1:7). The term comes from the same root word as "consecration". Moses told Israel, "'You are a holy people to the Lord . . . for His own possession'" (Dt 7:6). Joshua told them, "'He is a holy God'" (Jos 24:19). God desires to have a relationship with his people but advises, "'Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy'" (Lev 11:44). God told Moses to say, "'You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation'" (Ex 19:6). To accomplish this God instructs, "'You shall consecrate yourselves . . . and you shall keep My statutes and practice them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you'" (Lev 20:7-8).

Natural vs. Spiritual

Paul told the Romans "that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin" (Ro 3:9). Then in verses 10-12 he references Psalm 14:1-3 which are not exactly verbatim quotations because they are spiritually applied. Psalm 14:2 says that God "looked down from heaven . . . to see if there are any who understand", but Paul simply cites "there is none who understands" (Ro 3:11). God looks for any "who seek after God" (Ps

14:2), and Paul just says "there is none who seeks for God" (Ro 3:11). The precedent set was "all have turned aside, together they have become useless" (:12). Those references are prefaced with "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.'" (Ps 14:1). One could conclude from the context that no one seeks God because they don't believe that God exists in the first place. Abraham observed, "'There is surely no fear of God in this place'" (Ge 20:11). "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God" (:7). Many "are enemies of the cross of Christ" (Php 3:18) and "set their minds on earthly things" (:19). "A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1Co 2:14).

Therefore God had to take the initiative. Stephen testified that, "'The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia'" (Ac 7:2). "The Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country . . . to the land which I will show you'" (Ge 12:1). The Lord spoke to Abram as if they were face to face. Stephen explained God's appearing to Abram with the Greek word "optomai" which pertains to personal presence involving sight. Also, "the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre" (18:1) and Abram responded, "'My Lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by'" (:3).

God circumvents man when necessary as when "suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'" (Ac 9:4). Years later on Paul's third missionary journey they

entered Europe for the first time where God's assistance was needed. At Philippi "a certain woman named Lydia . . . was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul" (16:14). "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17) which is quickened as in Lydia's case. "But we have the mind of Christ" (1Co 2:16). "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (Php 2:5). "The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Ro 8:6).

Sanctification

When God saves a person "he is a new creature [in Christ]; the old passed away; behold, new things have come" (2Co 5:17). He becomes a heir of God's promises and is said to have a "position" in Christ. But having been reborn he needs to grow, and as he progresses, he is said to be experientially advancing. But it takes the work and grace of the Holy Spirit to establish this new creature and to build upon this foundation. This is called sanctification. It is a basic principle with God. In the beginning "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made" (Ge 2:3). God set this day apart to himself and made it holy. It becomes that way because, as Joshua told the people, God is "a holy God" (Jos 24:9). "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself" (Heb 6:13). Amos prefaced his prophecy with "the Lord God has sworn by Himself, the Lord God of hosts has declared" (Amos 6:8). Another time a prophecy began with "the Lord God has sworn by His holiness" (4:2). Not only is God the ultimate authority, his fundamental

characteristic is holiness. "The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times" (Ps 12:6). "Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You can not look on wickedness with favor" (Hab 1:13). The essence of his being is perfection. However, he is separate and distinct from his creation. Furthermore, man lives in a sinful world because of the Fall and is not holy. Therefore he must be cleansed and God is the only one who can do it. How did it get that way? The serpent tempted them in Eden by disputing God's truthfulness saying, "God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God" (Ge 3:5) implying that he was keeping godliness to himself. But God's creation is not synonymous with God himself. When Eve ate the fruit it was as if she was saying I will be equivalent to God. The Antichrist "exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God" (1Th 2:4). However, "God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification" (1Th 4:8). Therefore, "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (:3). God instituted a plan to restore Israel and even prophesied the end result (Ezekiel 36,37,47; Jeremiah 17,31; Joel 2; Zechariah 14).

Purification

God gave Moses the plans for the Tabernacle at Mt. Sinai. It is a type of how God's plans would be executed. Since God had rested from his work and blessed the seventh day (Ge 2:3) it was a logical place to start. Moses told Israel, "This is what the Lord meant: tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy

sabbath to the Lord" (Ex 16:23). "It is a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls" (Lev 23:32). Much later God reiterated through Jeremiah, "You shall not bring a load out of your houses on the sabbath day nor do any work" (Jer 17:22). Furthermore, "If you listen attentively to Me,' declares the Lord . . . 'then there will come in through the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David . . . and this city will be inhabited forever'" (:24-25). Another time God instructed, "You shall keep My commandments, and do them: I am the Lord. And you shall not profane My holy name, but I will be sanctified among the sons of Israel: I am the Lord who sanctifies you, who brought you out from the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the Lord" (Lev 22:31-33). There were extensive details. For example God said, "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offering of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me" (Ex 13:2).

It was a prophetic plan and God's designs come to pass. Through Ezekiel the goals which were expressed in Leviticus 22:31-33 were repeated. These were not just token ideas. In Ezekiel 36:25-29 God's promise of "I will" occurs nine times. He first deals with sin and idolatry. "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols" (Eze 36:25). God takes control saying, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (:26). The Spirit will "cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances" (:27). He would "gather them" (37:21) and "make them one nation in the land" (:22). "The nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in

their midst forever" (:28). "You will be My people, and I will be your God" (36:28). Additionally, "I will call for the grain and multiply it" (:29). Also, God repeats, "I will save you from all your uncleanness" (:29) where in verse 25 it says "will cleanse" which becomes equivalent to "will save." It also says, "I will sprinkle clean water on you" which illustrates purification. This is a fulfillment of Moses instructing "the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the Lord" (Lev 4:6).

Made Perfect

"The Lord has set apart the godly man for Himself" (Ps 4:3) and tells him to "be separate" (2Co 6:17). "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation" (2Th 2:13) and you become "saints by calling" (1Co 1:2). He told Jeremiah, "Before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1:5). "He saved us . . . according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). "You were washed, . . . sanctified, . . . [and] justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11). You "have been sanctified in Christ Jesus" (1:2) "through the offering of the body of Jesus" (Heb 10:10) "through His own blood" (13:12).

Paul states the purpose that "the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame" (1Th 5:23). It is for "the church of God . . . [for] all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 1:2). Jesus said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself" (Jn 17:19) "so that He might sanctify her" (Eph 5:26) and "present to Himself the church in

all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle" (:27). This is no halfway endeavor. It is so "that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (Jn 17:19) and you will "be holy yourselves also in all your behavior" (1Pe 1:2). "You have in obedience to the truth purified your souls" (:22). God will "also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit" (Ro 8:11) and have "our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb 10:22). Furthermore, he will "cleanse your conscience from dead works" (9:14) and have "our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience" (10:22). "By one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (10:14). "You have come to Mount Zion to the spirits of righteous men made perfect" (12:22-23).

Living Water

We "are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled by His blood" (1Pe 1:1-2). Jesus is "the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood" (Heb 12:24). What else participates in sanctification? Jesus instructed, "'Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth'" (Jn 17:17). We are saved "through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth" (2Th 2:13). Jesus said that you "'may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me'" (Ac 26:18). "It is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer" (1Ti 4:5).

Paul prayed that his "offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Ro 15:16). "The God of peace [will] sanctify you entirely" (1Th 5:23) for it is "He who sanctifies" (Heb 2:11). God

said, "I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel" (Eze 37:28). It is "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit" (1Pe 1:2). Jesus said, "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit" (Jn 7:38-39). He told the woman of Samaria, "If you knew the gift of God . . . He would have given you living water" (4:10). Furthermore, "the water I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life" (:14). Ezekiel prophesied, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean" (Eze 36:25). It says in the Law "he shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in running water and shall become clean" (Lev 15:13). Zechariah prophesied, "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity" (Zec 13:1). He is "the fountain of living waters" (Jer 2:13) "and in that day living waters will flow out of Jerusalem" (Zec 14:8). But "those who turn away on earth will be written down, because they have forsaken the fountain of living water" (Jer 17:13). Also, "he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you" (1Th 4:18). "Every living creature . . . where the river goes, will live" (Eze 47:9). "But its swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt" (:11).

Set Your Mind

"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth" (Col 3:1). There is pure "wisdom from above" (Jas 3:17), whereas if it is not from above, it is "earthy, natural, demonic" (:15) "which amounts to idolatry" (Col 3:5). "The one who practices sin is of the devil" (1Jn 3:8). Paul told the Corinthians,

"I could not speak to you as spiritual men, but as to men of flesh" (1Co 3:1). "Are you not walking like mere men?" (:3). Disobedience is not restricted just to non-Christians. He even said he would "deliver [one of the brethren] to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (5:5). Therefore "deny ungodliness and worldly desires" (Tit 2:12) and "live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (:12). "Keep seeking the things above, where Christ is" (Col 3:1).

The scriptures instruct to set your mind on the things above. But a person might say he is too busy at work needing to support his family. After all, there are laws against talking on a cell phone and driving at the same time. To make matters worse there is disease and depression. You are to keep believing, but could not these extenuating circumstances cause fatigue over time to make it harder and harder to believe? Perhaps an overriding motivation could erase lesser preoccupations. Maybe an all-encompassing world view would make smaller problems not as difficult to handle. If you focus on "the outcome, eternal life" (Ro 6:23) then "the second death has no power" (Rev 20:6). Abraham "without becoming weak in faith" (Ro 4:19) "did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God" (:20). But you need something significant to believe in to hold your attention. Abraham believed in "the promise of God" (:20). The promise according to Paul is "the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you stand, by which also you are saved" (1Co 15:1-2). It says that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day" (:3-4). Paul told the

Romans that "God displayed [Christ] publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness" (Ro 3:25). "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1Jn 2:2). The Tabernacle pictures propitiation. Each part of it represents a facet of salvation. Christ is the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement. It is so "that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Ro 3:26) "through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (:25). You might say that you should set your mind on redemption and justification. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus" (Php 2:5). He "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant" (:7) and "humbled himself and became obedient to death" (:8).

Be Sanctified

Paul told the Corinthians to "test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!" (2Co 13:5). Did he perceive that there were some that were not aware they weren't believers, or did he suggest this knowing that the process would build their faith? How do you even know how to examine yourself? He had previously asked, "Are you not fleshly, and are you walking like mere men?" (1Co 3:3). They could be either worldly men or "spiritual men" (:1). If the latter, "he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2Co 5:17). In this case Paul comments, "Do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" (13:5). But regarding the first case he observes "unless indeed you fail the test?" (:5). Here it could be that the person "does not accept the things of the Spirit . . . [since] he

cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (1Co 2:14). How difficult would it be to test yourself and decide? If you question excessively you may become like "the one who doubts [who] is like the surf of the sea" (Jas 1:6) and become like "a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (:8). It is possible to be both since Paul addressed them as "men of flesh . . . [as well as] babes in Christ" (1Co 3:1). How do you determine from which part of your mind the current thought originates? "He who is spiritual appraises all things" (2:15).

If you are spiritual you "are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:10). That should answer the test question "that Jesus Christ is in you" (2Co 13:5). Paul explains "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). Paul does not mean that he has been "beamed up", because he refers to "the life which I now live in the flesh" (:20). It does mean "you have died [to yourself] and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). He relates "in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God" (Gal 2:20). "You have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world" (Col 2:20). "If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him" (2Ti 2:11). "He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions" (Col 2:13).

Peter instructed "like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior" (1Pe 1:15). "In obedience to the truth [you] purified your souls" (:22). "Every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself" (1Jn 3:3). "This is the will of God . . . that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor" (1Th 4:3-4). "Do you not know that the

unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" (1Co 6:9). "Therefore do not be partakers with them . . . [but] walk as children of light" (Eph 5:7-8). Paul told them they "received from us instruction as to how to walk and please God" (1Th 4:1). He said "let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2Co 7:1). The goal is to have "clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps 24:4). "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work" (2Ti 2:21). "The unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife" (1Co 7:14). Women should "continue in faith and love and sanctify with self-restraint" (1Ti 2:15). Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). "He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness" (:10).

Keep Commandments

Is it possible to get so distracted and out of touch that you are required to "remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place -unless you repent" (Rev 2:5)? A more precipitous drop would be where "the falling away comes first" (2Th 2:3). How do you protect yourself from this possibility? Christ "is able to keep you from stumbling and to make you stand" (Jude 24). The Ephesian church had "been enlightened" (Heb 6:4), had "tasted of the heavenly gift" (:4), were "partakers of the Holy Spirit" (:4), and had "tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come" (:5). But they had "left [their] first love" (Rev 2:4) and

were being required to repeat their first deeds and reestablish a right attitude. Also, there are those who "have fallen away, and it is impossible to renew them again to repentance" (Heb 6:6). Reasons responsible for this are presented in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:3-8 and 18-23. Jesus explains the remedy saying, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" (Jn 15:7). The importance of this is cited by the words abide/abides occurring a dozen times in chapters 2-3 of First John. It comes under the subject of having a relationship. The First Commandment is "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex 20:3) in the context of God "showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (:6). Jesus taught, "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (Jn 15:10). "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you" (:12). John reiterates, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1Jn 4:7).

The initial chapters of First John emphasize this as John used the words write/written ten times. "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that reads it" (Hab 2:2). He states, "I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard" (1Jn 2:7). The church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph 2:20). Therefore the word is what the apostles taught having received the teaching from Jesus at the implementing of his

ministry. "This is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1Jn 3:11). It "is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning" (2Jn 6). Of course it occurred at the beginning of Christ's ministry, but furthermore, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "He was in the beginning with God" (:2) and "all things came into being through Him" (:3). These commands came to the apostles during their discipleship, but being Israelites, by extension they originate in the beginning of the Old Testament. "'You shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord. You are to keep my statutes'" (Lev 19:18-19). "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might'" (Dt 6:5).

Know the Truth

Everything John was writing in First John was "concerning those who are trying to deceive you" (1Jn 2:26). Someone from a different religion I knew often tried to persuade me with his doctrine. One day in his frustration he commented that their studies had shown that after X number of times a person would give in. But it wasn't true in my case because "the anointing which you received from Him abides in you" (:27). This is "the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it" (Mt 13:23). Why was John concerned about their being deceived? There is he who "has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away" (:21). Does your quality of character determine your propensity to believe "because they

had no depth of soil" (:5)? Jesus told the church at Philadelphia, "You have a little power, and have kept My word, and have not denied My name" (Rev 3:8). However, at Sardis he said, "You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die" (:1-2). "The sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away" (Mt 13:6). He told them, "You have kept the word of My perseverance" (Rev 3:10) and to "hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown" (:11). "The one who endures to the end, he will be saved" (Mk 13:13).

How do you "endure to the end" (:13) when there are "the worries of the world" (4:19) to contend with and "other things enter in and choke the word" (:19)? There are "the ones who are beside the road . . . [where] Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them" (:15). Do you keep the word refreshed by "meaningless repetition" (Mt 6:7)? A better way is to be of "the ones whom seed was sown on the good soil and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit" (Mk 4:20). John encouraged them saying "I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth" (1Jn 2:21). "The anointing which you received from Him abides in you . . . [and] teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie" (:27). "His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God" (3:9) since "the Spirit is the truth" (5:6). John taught to love "in deed and truth . . . [and] we will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him" (3:18-19). "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness" (1:5). If we "walk in darkness, we

lie and do not practice the truth" (:6). "The true Light is already shining" (2:8). "This is the true God and eternal life" (5:20) and he "has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true" (:20). "You know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him" (2:29) and "the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (3:7). "By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments" (2:3) and "whoever keeps His word, in Him the love of God has truly been perfected" (:5). Therefore "if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light" (1:7) "our heart does not condemn us, [and] we have confidence before God" (3:21).

God's Calling

Peter advised "always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1Pe 3:15). That could lead to your asking yourself why you believe. There's a rationale to this since Paul advised, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith, examine yourselves!" (2 Co 13:5). There's the saying, "Do as I say, not as I do." "Faith, if it has no works is dead, being by itself" (Ja 2:17). In the case of Sardis, Jesus observed, "I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead" (Rev 3:1). He said, "I have not found your deeds completed" (:2). They didn't have the dedication to fulfill what they had started because of their attitude and their endeavors were unfinished and incomplete. Paul told them to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good

pleasure" (Php 2:12-13). It is "not according to our works, but according to His own purpose" (2Ti 1:9).

God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2:4). "God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him" (Jn 3:17). He "gave Himself a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:6). It was "in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus" (Eph 3:11). You were "called according to His purpose" (Ro 8:28) and "called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing" (1Pe 3:9). "You were called into fellowship with His Son" (1Co 1:9). It was so "you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness" (1Pe 2:9). "A death has taken place for the redemption . . . [so that] those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15).

It is "Him who calls you" (Gal 5:8) "who called you by the grace of Christ" (1:6). It was "grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2Ti 1:9). Peter cited it was "'this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God'" (Ac 2:23). "He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you" (1Pe 1:20). "It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Th 2:14). God formulated the whole plan from the beginning. We "have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose" (Eph 1:11). God's plan predetermined that "all men [were] to be saved" (1Ti 2:4) and "that the world might be saved" (Jn 3:17). Paul concluded that it

was "God, who had set me apart from my mother's womb and called me through His grace" (Gal 1:15). Paul was God's "prisoner" (2Ti 1:8) and "the gifts and calling are irrevocable" (Ro 11:29).

Called and Chosen

Many people consider the call they received as having heard the gospel message and accordingly responded positively. It is as if at a certain time God chose them. However, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation" (2Th 2:13). "Those whom He foreknew, He also predestined" (Ro 8:29). You "are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father" (1Pe 1:1). Calvinists believe that you can only be saved if God chooses you and makes it possible. "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself" (Eph 1:5). Furthermore, "these whom He predestined, He also called" (Ro 9:23). We were "prepared beforehand, even us, whom He also called" (:24).

We are chosen "through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth" (2Th 2:13) "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled by His blood" (1Pe 1:2). It is so "that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, [that he] suffered outside the gate" (Heb 13:12). Consequently we are "called as saints" (Ro 1:7) and separated as sacred and holy. We are made holy and set apart as we "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (1Pe 3:15) and consecrate ourselves. It is so "that we

should be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph 1:4). He has "called us with a holy calling" (2Ti 1:9).

Paul came to the Corinthians "proclaiming to you the testimony of God" (1Co 2:1). There is "the testimony of our Lord" (2Ti 1:8) "concerning Christ" (1Co 1:6) which was "given at the proper time" (1Ti 2:6). Then there was Paul's testimony (2Ti 1:8) though "not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1Co 2:4). There was also John "who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:2) It contains "the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory" (1Co 2:7). It is composed of words "taught by the Spirit" (:13) as "God revealed them through the Spirit" (:10). "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Ro 10:17). Paul cites that "our testimony to you was believed" (2Th 1:10). It was "confirmed in you" (1Co 1:6) and God "will also confirm you to the end" (:8). Peter said, "We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (Jn 6:69). There is "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (Ro 3:22). But in Jesus' parable the king "'saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes'" (Mt 22:11). However, "He has clothed me with garments of salvation" (Ps 61:10) and "her priests also I will clothe with salvation" (132:16). The king told them to "'throw him into outer darkness'" (Mt 22:13) which explains that "many are called, but few are chosen" (:14). The wedding guest had decided not to dress properly. "Those who disbelieve" (1Pe 2:7) "stumble because they are disobedient to the word" (:8). Just as "for you who believe" (:7) God "predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son" (Ro 8:29) "those

who disbelieve" (1Pe 2:7) "to this doom they were also appointed" (:8).