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Divine Nature & Attributes of God (Romans 1:20)

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God Delivers and Translates (Colossians 1:13)

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Divinity (Romans 1:20)

Perhaps one of the first roles you ascribe to God is Creator. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Ge 1:1). God was present "before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world" (Ps 90:2). In Genesis the "Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Ge 1:2). Simultaneously "by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth" (Col 1:16). This was Jesus Christ who is "the image of the invisible God" (:15). Then God saw that everything "was very good" (Ge 1:31). This is all scriptural because it "is given by inspiration of God" (2Ti 3:16). "Prophecy of Scripture . . . [came as] holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2Pe 1:21). Some religious books may have stories about creation but they'd be mythological. However, astronomers have recently estimated how many billions of years old the universe is. Adam and Eve lived at a certain time but you can't necessarily ascertain when that was. The Bible refers to creation many times to emphasize its importance, reinforce your understanding, and build faith in God.

Psalms relate God's achievement. "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host" (Ps 33:6). "He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever" (104:5). This is accomplished because "The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord has clothed and girded Himself with strength" (93:1). "The

heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands" (19:1). The psalmist reflects saying "I consider your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and stars which You have ordained" (8:3). The theme continues in the New Testament. "Turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them" (Ac 14:15). "You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created" (Rev 4:11). "He made from one man every nation of mankind" (Ac 17:26) and "gives to all people life and breath and all things" (:25). Isaiah recognizes "But now, O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand" (Isa 64:8). Malachi says "Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us?" (Mal 2:10). It's part of a cooperative endeavor because "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Job 33:4). The purpose is "that they would seek God . . . [because] He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live and move and exist" (Ac 17:27-28).

Revelation

The book of Revelation begins with "the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show" (Rev 1:1). It was the "testimony of Jesus Christ" (:2) and sent to John "who testified to the word of God" (:2). God had appeared to them in a "pillar of fire" (Ex 13:21) and "thick cloud" (19:9) which was to "give them light" (13:21) and so that they would "believe" (19:9). At Mt. Sinai God appeared with "thunder and lightning flashes . . . and a

very loud trumpet sound" (19:16) so the "people may hear" (:9). The Lord spoke to Moses, Aaron and Miriam (Nu 12:4) and they "came out" (:4) to the tent of meeting. Then God addressed Aaron and Miriam about speaking against Moses. They should have been more careful because when God speaks revealing himself you should pay attention.

How is it that you can hear and understand God? God had said, "Let Us make man in Our image" (Ge 1:26). "In the image of God He made man" (9:6). Being in the image does not mean having been cloned. It means "according to Our likeness" (1:26) as James states that we are men "who have been made in the likeness of God" (Jas 3:9). How it functions depends on God's sovereign purpose. "The Lord appeared to [Moses] in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush" (Ex 3:2). When Moses decided to investigate "the Lord saw that he turned aside" (:4) and spoke to him. If we are open to God he will reveal what he desires. Moses' situation was special because God said, "With him I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings, and he beholds the form of the Lord" (Nu 12:8). As Christians we "put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created" (Eph 4:24) and "is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Col 3:10). God said through Jeremiah that "you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer 29:11). There is a general revelation available from nature and the works of God and special

revelation through scripture (the Living Word) and subjective experience which lines up with God's word. "We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true . . . the true God and eternal life" (1Jn 5:20).

Spirit

"God is spirit" (Jn 4:24). "No one has seen God at any time . . . [however, Jesus] has explained Him" (1:18). God "possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see" (1Ti 6:16). Isaiah said, "You are a God who hides Himself" (Isa 45:15). He is "invisible" (1Ti 1:17). God says, "I dwell on a high and holy place" (Isa 57:15). Zophar asked, "Can you discover the limits of the Almighty? They are high as the heavens, what can you do?" (Job 11:7). How "unfathomable [are] His ways!" (Ro 11:33).

Why is God's revelation essential? It is because of the relationship with God man finds himself in since God had said "you will surely die" (Ge 2:17) if Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Even though God created man in his image and likeness and said "You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High" (Ps 82:6) he also stated "Nevertheless you will die like men" (:6). The psalmist asked, "What is man that You take thought of him?" (Ps 8:4). Man is just a created being and "God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'" (Ex 3:14) which shows the difference. "God is not a man" (Nu 23:19). Therefore man does not innately know about

the divine. Jesus knew what was required when he asked, "Who do you say that I am?" (Mt 16:15). Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (:16). Jesus recognized and said "flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (:17). Therefore the Lord has optimistically offered, "Come now, and let us reason together" (Isa 1:18). At the anthropological level God reaches out with analogical revelations to achieve a redemptive relationship.

Infinite

God is omnipotent which means he is all-powerful. He has infinite capacity to accomplish what he wants and the authority to exercise that power. John expresses it with "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns" (Rev 19:6). "Job answered the Lord and said, 'I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted'" (Job 42:2). "He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have you done?'" (Da 4:35). "Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?" (Mt 20:15). "You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?' On the contrary, who are you O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it?" (Ro 9:19-20). Jesus "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb 1:3). "Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'" (Mt 19:26). The Lord said to Abraham, "Is anything too

difficult for the Lord?" (Ge 18:14). Paul acknowledged that God was "able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us" (Eph 3:20).

God is omniscient because he has infinite understanding of all things. "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth, by understanding He established the heavens" (Pr 3:19). "He counts the number of the stars; He gives names to all of them. Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite" (Ps 147:4-5). "Who gave Him understanding . . . [or] taught Him knowledge? (Isa 40:14). God's ability is reflected in his knowledge, wisdom and understanding. "With Him are wisdom and might; to Him belong counsel and understanding" (Job 12:13). "Daniel said, 'Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him . . . He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.'" (Da 2:20-21). Wisdom is the joining of the knowledge of truth with experience in life. "It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things" (:22). "For truly my words are not false; One who is perfect in knowledge is with you. Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding" (36:4-5). "In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will" (Eph 1:8-9).

God is omnipresent which means he is in all places at all times. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, watching the evil and the good" (Pr 15:3). "Where can I go from Your Spirit? "There is no creature hidden from

His sight" (Heb 3:13). Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Your hand will lay hold of me" (Ps 139:7-10). Solomon exclaimed, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built?" (1Ki 8:27). "Am I a God who is near,' declares the Lord, 'and not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?' declares the Lord" (Jer 23:23-24).

Sovereign

God is unique. "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!" (Dt 6:4). "There is no God but one" (1Co 8:4). Isaiah says "He is the God who formed the earth . . . to be inhabited" (Isa 45:18). God said "I am the Lord, and there is none else" (:18). Furthermore God says, "I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me. I, even I, am the Lord" (43:10-11). He directs to "turn to Me and be saved . . . for I am God, and there is no other" (45:22). There is "one body and one Spirit" (Eph 4:6) and "one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Jesus Christ" (1Ti 2:5). We are to "turn from these vain things to a living God" (Ac 14:15) to "serve a living and true God" (1Th 1:9). "The Father has life in Himself" (Jn 5:26). You could "fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31). There is also a "seal of the living God" (Rev 7:2).

God is sovereign. "Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases" (Ps 115:3). God is eternal (Ge 21:33; Dt 33:27). "Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God" (Ps 90:2). You can depend on God. "I, the Lord, do not change" (Mal 3:6). With God "there is no variation or shifting shadow" (Jas 1:17). God always does what is right. "The Lord is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds" (Ps 145:17). "The sum of Your word is truth" (Ps 119:160). "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). God also protects. God is "their help and their shield" (Ps 115:9) and "our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble" (46:1). "He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one" (2Th 3:3). "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but . . . will provide a way of escape also" (1Co 10:13). But we make mistakes. However, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jo 1:9).

Holy

God is holy and you can trust him. "Who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?" (Ex 15:11). "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy" (Rev 15:4). Holiness is to be separated from the commonplace or vulgar. Seraphim proclaim his holiness (Isa 6:3; Rev 4:8). "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44) because without sanctification "no one will see the Lord" (Heb 12:14). To be holy is being dedicated to God's purposes. God is the

one "who sanctifies you" (Lev 20:8). However, "if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves" (1Jn 1:8). We do not rely on "a righteousness of my own" (Php 3:9) which is inadequate that "comes through the Law" (Gal 2:21). We depend on "the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Php 3:9). "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). God's righteousness is a perfect standard of right behavior. "His work is perfect, for all His ways are just" (Dt 32:4). He is "the Lord our righteousness" (Jer 23:6). "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne" (Ps 89:14). "I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord." (Jer 9:24).

God is good. Jesus said, "There is only One who is good" (Mt 19:17). "The Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations" (Ps 100:5). "The Lord good to all, and His mercies are over all His works" (Ps 145:9). "You are a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness" (Neh 9:17). God "because of His great love with which He loved us . . . made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:4-5). "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8). "I trust in the loving kindness of God forever and ever" (52:8). Therefore "give thanks to" (Ps 30:4) and "bless His holy name" (103:1).

Trinity

Triune means three in unity. When it applies to God it pertains to three persons in one Godhead. The word *trinity* is not found in the Bible and the Old Testament does not directly teach it. However in Genesis God said, "Let Us make man in Our Image, according to Our likeness" (Ge 1:26). Then after man was created he said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil" (3:22). The Trinity is inferred by the use of the plural pronoun "us." Later God said, "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech" (11:7). Then Isaiah "heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'" (Isa 6:8).

The three, equal members of the Trinity cooperate because they are one God. But tritheists believe that the three members of the Godhead are entirely separate and have individual hierarchical importance. Also, those who believe in Sabellianism say God takes the form called for at the time saying that there is only one God and no multiple personages. However, the Bible has passages which mention A) the Father and Jesus, B) the Father and Spirit, C) the Son and Spirit, and D) God, Holy Spirit and Christ. In the first case "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn 1:1). "Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name or His Son's name?" (Pr 30:4). "I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, 'You are My Son, today I have begotten You'" (Ps 2:7). Because "God so loved the world" (Jn 3:16) he "sent forth

His Son" (Gal 4:4). Jesus says, "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (Jn 6:38). Their relationship is such that "no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son" (Mt 11:27). Then because of what was accomplished at the resurrection "whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (1Jn 4:15). "It was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him" (Col 2:9). John said "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1Jn 1:3).

In the second case "the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God" (1Co 2:11). It is "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the Lord of hosts" (Zec 4:6). The interrelationship is seen as when "the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders" (Nu 11:25). Nehemiah relates to the Father and Spirit by saying "You bore with them for many years, and admonished them by Your Spirit through your prophets" (Neh 9:30). "He who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you" (1Th 4:8). In the third case Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit" (Ro 1:4). Isaiah cites the Messiah and Spirit with "for He said, 'Surely they are My people but they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit'" (Isa 63:10). A unilateral example is when "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (1Sa 16:13).

The Holy Spirit "intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Ro 8:27).

Unity

God being collectively one is similar to Adam and Eve who would "become one flesh" (Ge 2:24). "God created man in His own image . . . male and female He created them" (Gen 1:27). It is like a puzzle. Without the other piece it would be incomplete. Each piece is different and the image would not be whole unless all is pieced together. "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise" (1Co 7:4) with the other partner. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct yet one in nature and character. Jesus said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). He said "the Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (10:38) and "I and the Father are one" (:30). He also prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are" (17:11). Being one also means having a single mind and purpose. Jesus prayed "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one" (Jn 17:21-22). "Do you not know . . . that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price" (1Co 7:20).

Perhaps the Trinity is most clearly seen with all three working together with purpose. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the

Holy Ghost: these three are one" (1Jn 5:7 KJV). The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God" (Lk 1:35). "Now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit" (Isa 48:16). In Jesus' baptism "Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased'" (Mt 3:16-17). Jesus was in the water, the Father spoke from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove. All three are present and separate. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me" (Isa 61:1). Hebrews reports "how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience?" (Heb 9:14). It is "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ" (1Pe 1:2). Later Jesus applied this truth by saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). He also said, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth" (Jn 14:16-17). Paul offered "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, ministering as a priest the gospel of God, so that my offering of the Gentiles may become acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Ro 15:16). Paul prayed "the grace of the Lord

Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (2Co 13:14).

The Son of God

"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).

Son of David

Adam and Eve disobeyed God (Ge 3:6). One of God's responses was to the serpent. He said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head" (:15). When you consider God had said to Adam, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (1:28), Eve's seed could be anyone. But God had a plan. Ultimately an angel announced that, "today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). Matthew records a "genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David" (Mt 1:1). "Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah" (:16). The name "Christ" means that God had anointed him supernaturally with power to accomplish what he had been assigned to do. It was further explained that "the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (Lk 1:32-33). Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" (Mt 22:42). They answered, "The son of David" (:42).

The Jews believed this because of what Nathan prophesied to King David that, "the Lord also declares to

you that . . . I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come forth from you . . . and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2Sa 7:11-13). David prayed that God would "confirm it forever, and do as You have spoken" (:25). Even though there is no eschatological foundation in the Old Testament for a Davidic dynasty, Jews regarded the promise as God potentially returning to restore Israel's monarchy. There is a Hebrew word "mashah" which deals with anointing with oil. The word "mashiach" comes from it which refers to the "anointed one" who would become this messianic king. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ" (Ac 17:3).

Peter explained "that God had sworn to [David] with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne" (Ac 2:30). "He was a prophet" (:30) and predicted "For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay" (Ps 16:10). "Surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets" (Am 3:7). Peter said that David "looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ" (Ac 2:31). "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses" (:32). He also said that Jesus was "delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God" (:23). God's plan is cited by Matthew (Mt 1:22-23) when he quotes the prophecy "the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel" (Isa 7:14). Matthew also speaks of the prophecy regarding the

Messiah being born in Bethlehem (Mt 2:6) quoting "from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity" (Mic 5:2).

Christ and Lord

At Corinth Paul began "solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ" (Ac 18:5). The angel had said "there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk 2:11). He was "born for you." Mary was told "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Scripture says Jesus is Lord. Jesus confessed, "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am" (Jn 13:13). Peter stated "that God has made Him both Lord and Christ" (Ac 2:36). "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Php 2:11). When a person is referred to as a "lord" it means he occupies a supreme place.

When Peter explains Jesus' position he shows "having been exalted to the right hand of God . . . [he] received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" (Ac 2:33). Being exalted would be occupying a "supreme place" and he can be referred to as "Lord." To prove it Peter explains that from Jesus' position "He has poured forth this which you both see and hear" (:33). This is substantiated because he quotes "It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind" (Joe 2:28). Even Jesus refers to prophecy to make a point. He asks the Pharisees, "How does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,'" (Mt 22:43) for "if David then calls Him 'Lord,'

how is He his son?" (:45). The reference is "The Lord says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet'" (Ps 110:1). Jesus was proving that he was the Messiah and "no one was able to answer Him a word" (Mt 22:46).

Part of Jesus' assignment was "to teach and preach in the cities" (Mt 11:1). But he told them, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (Jn 7:16). This is not to conclude that he was just a messenger. After the resurrection he declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Mt 28:18). "All things that the Father has are Mine" (Jn 16:15). Jesus had told them to wait until he sent the Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49) "whom the Father will send in My name" (Jn 14:26). Jesus told them "when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth" (16:13). All scripture is true. "He who sent Me is true" (8:26). Jesus said that the Spirit "will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak" (16:13). Jesus had said "the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world" (8:26). He said that the Spirit would "glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall disclose it to you" (16:14). Jesus always gave God credit. When he quoted Exodus 20:12 he said it was the "commandment of God" (Mt 15:3) and that "God said" (:4) it. When he quoted Exodus 3:6 he said it was "spoken to you by God" (22:31). When teaching he asked "have you not read?" (19:4) and declared they were "not understanding the Scriptures" (22:29). He quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 to prove, "It is written" (Lk 4:4) and Isaiah 29:13 to

emphasize Isaiah's prophecy (Mk 7:6). He knew that the "Jews ask for signs" (1Co 1:22) so he gave them the "sign of Jonah the prophet" (Mt 12:39). He also quoted Psalm 110:1 as an example of an Old Testament anointing where "David himself said in the Holy Spirit" (Mk 12:36). This confirms that, "He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you" (Jn 14:26). "I did not come to abolish [the Law] but to fulfill" (Mt 5:17). "My words will not pass away" (24:35).

God is Faithful

Being faithful means following through on a promise you've made. "The Lord is not slow about His promise . . . not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). "He who promised is faithful" (Heb 10:23). However, we must "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering" (:23). By faith Sarah had Isaac because "she considered Him faithful who had promised" (11:11). "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass" (1Th 5:24). It is the way God is. It is his name. John said, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True" (Rev 19:11). He "made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever" (Ps 146:6). "In the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness" (Ps 89:2). "The witness in the sky is faithful" (89:37).

You are faithful when a friend knows he can depend on you for help. She should be "faithful to her husband" (1Ti 5:9 NIV). "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps His covenant" (Dt 7:9). She is "your wife by covenant" (Mal 3:14) so "do not break faith" (:15 NIV). "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself" (2Ti 2:13). "Listen, that you may live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, according to the faithful mercies shown to David" (Isa 55:3). "All the paths of the Lord are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies" (Ps 25:10). Deuteronomy 7:9 also says God "keeps His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments." Faith and love go together. "My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him" (Ps 89:24). "The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness" (La 3:22-23).

God's faithfulness is manifested. "I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; for You have worked wonders, plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness" (Isa 25:1). "His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He" (Dt 32:4). "The word of the Lord is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness" (Ps 33:4). We are the recipient of God's work, but it is a two-way street. "Those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right" (1Pe 4:19). "My eyes shall be upon the faithful of

the land, that they may dwell with me; He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me" (Ps 101:6). Therefore "the Lord preserves the faithful" (Ps 31:23).

God is Compassionate

Moses desired to know more about God (Ex 33:18). God answered "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you" (:19). He already knew Moses "by name" (:17). Consequently "the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin'" (34:6-7). When God said he would declare his name he also stated "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on who I will show compassion" (33:19). God understands when someone is going through a trial and in his concern he endeavors to alleviate suffering. He is sympathetic and considerate and desires to demonstrate kindness. He expects us to practice it too. Jesus taught "go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE'" (Mt 9:13). Furthermore Jesus said "if you had known what this means . . . you would not have condemned the innocent" (12:7). Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 where "compassion" is translated from "mercy" (NIV) and "loyalty" (NASB).

How does God accomplish his purposes? How would humans even comprehend? God is "able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think" (Eph 3:20). Isaiah 55:9 says "My ways [are] higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts." "He has made everything appropriate in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end" (Ecc 3:11). God does "great things which we cannot comprehend" (Job 37:5). In his "hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind" (12:10). It does not depend on man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy" (Ro 9:16). God works through people despite their predispositions. Lot and his family were saved because "the compassion of the Lord was upon him" (Ge 19:16). "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Ro 8:28). God "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but . . . will provide a way of escape" (1Co 10:13). God made Israel "objects of compassion before those who have taken them captive, that they may have compassion on them" (1Ki 8:50). "God granted Daniel favor and compassion in the sight of the commander of the officials" (Da 1:9).

God is Gracious

Gracious and compassionate applies to God (Ex 34:6). Many scriptures pair the two terms together (Ex 33:19; 2Ch 30:9; Ne 9:31; Ps 102:13,112:4; Isa 30:18; Joel 2:13; Jnh 4:2). To be gracious is to be benevolent,

congenial and loving. To be compassionate is to be charitable, kindhearted and merciful. These characteristics are the motivation for everything God does. Jesus told Philip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). When Jesus saw "the people, He felt compassion for them" (Mt 9:36) and was "moved with compassion" (Mt 20:34, Mk 1:41). They cried to God "in their time of distress [and he] heard from heaven, and according to [his] great compassion gave them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their oppressors" (Ne 9:27).

Another term paired with "compassion" in the Bible is "lovingkindness" (Ne 13:22; Ps 25:6,40:11, 69:16, 103:4,106:45-46,119:76-77; Isa 54:7-10; Jn 4:2). Paul said to "put on a heart of compassion" (Col 3:12). Love is the main ingredient. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:36). Paul said "if there is any consolation of love, . . . if any affection and compassion . . . [be] of the same mind, maintaining the same love" (Php 2:1-2). Jesus said, "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love" (Jn 15:9). "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends" (:13).

The Lord proclaimed further that it is he "who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin" (Ex 34:7). "To the Lord our God belong compassion and forgiveness" (Da 9:9). "The Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (Jas 5:11). "He, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity and did not

destroy them" (Ps 78:38). "He who confesses and forsakes [his transgressions] will find compassion" (Pr 28:13). Therefore "be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Eph 4:32 NIV).

God Judges and Is Just

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap" (Gal 6:7). God has built a cause-and-effect into life which automatically judges. "'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near'" (Dt 32:35). "'I will repay', says the Lord" (Ro 12:19). "God is not one to show partiality" (Ac 10:34). There is "no injustice with God" (Ro 9:14). He is "the one who impartially judges according to each one's work" (1Pe 1:17). "We know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things" (Ro 2:2). "How unsearchable are His judgments" (Rev 15:3). "'Righteous and true are your ways'" (:3).

What you do makes a difference because it determines whether you will "inherit the kingdom" (Mt 25:34). What qualifies is if you help feed, clothe and house people, and visit people when they are sick or in prison (:35-36). They "were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds" (Rev 20:12). It should make one take notice that his actions are actually recorded. "Whatever good thing each one does, he will receive back from the Lord" (Eph 6:8). "You recompense a man according to his work" (Ps 62:12).

Paul quotes this regarding "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS" (Ro 2:5-6). Jesus says "My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done" (Rev 22:12). "By perseverance in doing good . . . [you receive] eternal life" (Ro 2:7). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (3:16). But "He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life" (1Jn 5:12).

God is "the Judge of all" (Heb 12:23) but "not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son" (Jn 5:22). He is "the One who has been appointed by God a Judge of the living and the dead" (Ac 10:42). "God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Ro 2:16). "There is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known" (Lk 12:2). Is there a time for this? "We will all stand before the judgment seat of God" (Ro 14:10). "He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Ac 17:31). "Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent" (:30). He "is patient toward you, not wishing for

any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2Pe 3:9). "He ordered [the Apostles] to preach to the people and solemnly to testify" (Ac 10:42) about it. "The Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven . . . dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus" (2Th 1:7-8). "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Mt 10:28). "The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish" (Jn 10:27-28). "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you" (Jn 14:2). However, "He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Mt 25:41).

Judgment

Is God's judgment complicated because there are so many different people and religions? Perhaps it can be simplified to just the Jew and the Gentile. God "desires all men to be saved" (1Ti 2:4). It is evaluated when we all "appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2Co 5:10). "All the nations will be gathered before Him" (Mt 25:32). It is "on the day when . . . God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus" (Ro 2:16). God has clearly revealed his divinity and power such that it is obvious and

“they are without excuse” (1:20) if they don’t concur. This is at the "great white throne" (Rev 20:11). "The dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds" (:12). "He will separate them from one another" (Mt 25:32) and "say to those on His right, 'Come . . . inherit the kingdom'" (:34) and "those on His left, 'Depart from Me'" (:41). "Those who did the good deeds [will go] to a resurrection of life, [and] those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment " (Jn 5:29). We know God is fair because he “does not show partiality" (Dt 10:17) and "in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him" (Ac 10:34-35).

Judgment and reward are synonymous because "My reward is with Me" (Rev 22:12). God will “render to every man according to what he has done" (:12). He will "search the heart, . . . test the mind . . . [and] give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds" (Jer 17:10). Each will "be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done" (2Co 5:10). There are principles God judges by. "Whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:7-8).

Man Created (Genesis 1:27)

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). 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).

Repent from Sin

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).

“Having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent” (Ac 17:30). The Holy Spirit convicts “the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment; concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me” (Jn 16:8-9). 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).

Sin and Death

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).

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).

Paul concludes by saying "I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh" (Ro 7:18). "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9). 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).

Wrath

Is God angry at the world? On the contrary, A God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (Jn 3:16). However, it happened that "every intent of the thoughts of . . . [man's] heart was only evil continually" (6:5). So God "was sorry that He had made man on the earth" (:6). It is not a matter of retribution because "God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world" (Jn 3:17). God sent "the Son into the world . . . that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn 3:17). 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) because "Christ died for our sins" (1Co 15:3). The "Son of Man

has come to seek and save that which was lost” (Lk 19:10). Jesus said “‘I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE’, for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mt 9:13).

In society there is a penalty to pay when someone has transgressed the law. It is a legal matter of “judgment” (Jn 5:24). “Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Heb 9:22). “The life of the flesh is in the blood . . . for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement” (Lev 17:11). God anticipated this because Christ “was foreknown before the foundation of the world” (1Pe 1:20) and “His works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb 4:3). Therefore Christ became “the Lamb that was slain” (Rev 5:12) “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10). Christ “gave himself as a ransom for all” (1Ti 2:6). “There is one God, and one mediator also between God and men” (1Ti 2:5). “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved” (Ac 4:12). “Besides Me there is no savior” (Isa 43:11). Jesus said, “‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me’” (Jn 14:6).

"If by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Ro 8:13). If you live then does that mean you won't die? That isn't the context, for another interpretation of death is that you are not alive spiritually. "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" (Rev 3:1-2). "I advise

you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich" (:18). "Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief" (:3) and "remove your lampstand out of its place" (2:5). God both gives and takes. Realistically speaking "to live is Christ" (Php 1:21) and "in Christ all will be made alive" (1Co 15:22). Since "Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness" (Ro 8:10).

Be Transformed

Why is it necessary to repent from sin? Sin originated in the Garden of Eden. God had commanded Adam, "From the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die" (Ge 2:17). But Eve "took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (3:6). However "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). Consequently the sin had to be dealt with. The serpent was "more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (:1) and deceived Eve (:1-5). God told him Eve's seed "shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (:15). This person who was promised was the seed of Abraham "that is, Christ" (Gal 3:16) because "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Ge 22:18). Christ came "to destroy the works of the devil" (1Jn 3:8). Christ died that "He might render powerless him who had the

power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb 2:14). This was all necessary because Adam was "the one who sinned" (Ro 5:16) and "by a man came death" (1Co 15:21), but "in Christ all shall be made alive" (:22).

"In Adam all die" (1Co 15:22). Paul says "you were dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Ge 6:5). These are the works of the devil that Christ had to overcome. Humans are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph 2:3) because they live in a worldly way "according to the prince of the power of the air" (:2). We "lived in the lusts of our flesh" (:3) and a person who indulges in "the desires of the flesh and mind" (:3) "is dead even while she lives" (1Ti 5:6). When Paul became aware of sin through the Law he said "it killed me" (Ro 7:11). But there is a way to "save his soul from death" (Ja 5:20). "When we were dead in our transgressions, [God] made us alive together with Christ" (Eph 2:5). Jesus said, "'You have no life in yourselves'" (Jn 6:53) so we are saved "according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Ro 12:2). "Repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away" (Ac 3:19). God accomplishes this because he said, "'I will put My Spirit within you'" (Eze 36:27). John said that Jesus "'will baptize you with the Holy Spirit'" (Mt 3:11). "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2Co 5:17). "'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit'" (Jn 3:6). We are

"born again to a living hope" (1Pe 1:3) "through the living and enduring word of God" (:23).

Heaven or Hell?

People say "I'm a good person. I even believe there is a God. If there is a hell I wouldn't go there because I'm not a bad person." So where would you fit in with Romans 1:18 which says "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness"? Supposedly you wouldn't suffer God's wrath if you weren't godless or wicked. What does "godless" mean? If you didn't believe in God then that would qualify. But James 2:19 says that even "the demons also believe, and shudder." Does that qualify them as being a friend of God free from God's wrath? By definition they are not in that category even though they are familiar with God.

The goal is to get to heaven, but how? If you know the proprietor then you would be allowed entry. The key is knowing God. It must be in a personal way, otherwise, "I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME" (Mt 7:23). It is possible because Romans 1:19 talks of "that which is known about God." It is the "truth of God" (:25) and is "understood" (:20). Daniel 12:4 says in the last days "knowledge will increase." Since God "made the heavens with skill" (Ps 136:5) does man know God by intelligence and reason? That is not possible because to make the leap from the physical to the eternal requires God's revelation.

"God made it evident to them . . . since the creation of the world" (Ro 1:19-20). "His invisible attributes . . . have been clearly seen . . . 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 operates continually for "I have drawn you with lovingkindness" (Jer 31:3).

Provision

"Since the creation . . . [God is] clearly seen" (Ro 1:20). That "they knew God" (:21) you get the impression that it was the default condition of man to know him. However, Romans 1:18-32 explains that God's wrath is directed against the unrighteous. According to Paul they didn't start out that way. Does this discuss man's downhill slide from the beginning or is it a picture of every person's potential journey established by choosing his own fate?

In a negative sense it is God's wrath one would wish to avoid, but in a positive way it is being saved by Jesus' provision which insulates from wrath. The question is where is our starting point? Are we inherently righteous because it says that man knew God from creation? If that was the case then if someone didn't spoil his own inherent righteousness God would rescue him regardless even though he hadn't heard the Gospel. But the Bible doesn't say that. It says in Romans 5:19 that "through the one man's disobedience the many were

made sinners.” If men are inherently sinful then they must be saved regardless of whether they “suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Ro 1:18) or not.

What constitutes the backsliding Paul relates which a conscientious person would endeavor to avoid? 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. This would bring into question the doctrine of eternal security. If they didn't “hold fast . . . until the end” (Heb 3:6) then they wouldn't be saved.

Consequences

How do you qualify to get to heaven? “Not everyone . . . will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he

who does the will of My Father" (Mt 7:21). God will give "to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Ro 2:7). "The judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things" (2:2). There is "the truth of God" (1:25). Therefore following the truth is essential. What do you think the destiny of those who "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (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). "It flatters him in his own eyes . . . [and] he has ceased to be wise and to do good" (Ps 36:2-3). 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). Their "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).

The Jew has the Law, so you might say God judges them that way since "the doers of the Law will be justified" (Ro 2:13). Also, "all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law" (:12). Then, Gentiles who do not have the law but "have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law" (:12). In addition, "if the

uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?" (:26). What about a person who does NOT "suppress the truth (Ro 1:18)", has NOT "exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image" (:23), and has NOT "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (:25)? They would be Gentiles who "do instinctively the things of the Law . . . [which are] a law to themselves" (Ro 2:14). It would "show the work of the Law written in their hearts" (:15).

When "God made it evident to them" (Ro 1:19) it was to their heart. "God has allotted to each a measure of faith" (Ro 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).

Therefore "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve" (Jos 24:15). You don't receive salvation by osmosis. Be careful because "the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" (2Co 4:4).

Born Again (John 3:3)

Two characters in the Bible were concerned about the consequences of what they had heard. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews" (Jn 3:1) and Jesus concurred saying he was a "teacher of Israel" (:10). The Jews had the Torah but it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (Heb 10:4). Jesus said to him unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of

God” (Jn 3:3). Jesus also had a rich young man come to him and ask what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Mk 10:17). He was like Nicodemus and said I have kept all these things from my youth up” (:20). But Jesus solution was go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me” (:21).

There are specific instructions to accomplish this. You must:

- He who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion” (Pr 28:13).
- Repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away” (Ac 3:19).
- Be converted and become like children” (Mt 18:3).
- He who humbles himself will be exalted” (Lk 18:14).
- Him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God” (Ps 50:23).
- Depart from evil and do good, so you will abide forever” (Ps 37:27).
- He who practices the truth comes to the Light” (Jn 3:21).

Salvation is available because:

- Whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

- He who believes in the Son has eternal life” (Jn 3:36).
- He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved” (Mk 16:16).
- Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Ac 16:31).
- Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins” (Ac 10:43).
- But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (Jn 1:12).

Gospel

Yard sales are popular. You hear about them in the newspaper or from signs on the street. Salvation is popular, but unless you hear about it, you cant find it. "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Ac 4:12). Therefore "WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED" (Ro 10:13). For if they don't know about Jesus Christ then they can't call upon his name, and since there is "no other name" (Ac 4:12) they can't be saved and go to heaven. In fact the gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Ro 1:16). Without access to it, salvation is scripturally impossible.

One might say that this is easier said than done. Even Jesus said it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19:23). The disciples responded,

"Then who can be saved?" (:25). Jesus replied, "With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (:26). Jesus instructs Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed" (Mt 8:13. All things are possible to him who believes" (Mk 9:23). Romans 10:8-18 summarizes Paul's message. The fact that "the word is . . . in your heart" (Ro 10:8) is equivalent to being "within them" (1:19). "The word of faith which we are preaching" (10:8) has gone to "the ends of the world" (:18). The verse quotes "the heavens are telling of the glory of God" (Ps 19:1). God's "invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature . . . [are] understood through what has been made" (Ro 1:20). According to Paul it is now "their voice" (10:18) and "their words" (:18) instead of the heavens doing the preaching. So if someone has "never heard" (10:18) the message he will not have the "faith" (:17) to "call upon the name of the Lord" (:13). If you have the message and "if you confess . . . and believe . . . [in Jesus] you shall be saved" (:9). You must hear:

- It is the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph 1:13).
- If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching" (Jn 7:17).
- "All Scripture is inspired by God" (2Ti 3:16).
- It has been written so that you may believe" (Jn 20:31).

- It is the power of God for salvation” (Ro 1:16).
- He has brought us forth by the word of truth” (Jas 1:18).
- It is the living and enduring word of God” (1Pe 1:23).

Believe

There’s a saying seeing is believing. However, Jesus said you have seen Me and yet do not believe” (Jn 6:36). “He who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Heb 11:6). Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Ro 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). Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Ro 10:17). Therefore it is by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8-9). But when you hear the sayings you must “act on them” (Mt 7:26). Otherwise you will be like ‘those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved” (Lk 8:12).

Believing is positive and not passive. It reflects that you are a new creature; the old things passed away;

behold, new things have come” (2Co 5:17). You have been delivered from the domain of darkness, and transferred . . . to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col 1:13). It is essential that it be expressed. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God” (1Jn 4:15). Confession is made “resulting in salvation” (Ro 10:10). “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven” (Mt 10:32).

By a deliberate decision you believed” (Eph 1:13), received” (Jn 1:12) and were reconciled to God” (Ro 5:10). You have redemption through His blood” (Eph 1:7). Redemption is the price paid to ransom you from slavery to sin. The Father will pass over you” (Ex 12:13) and you were sealed in Him” (Eph 1:13) because you profess dependence upon the covering of the blood of Christ for your life. You are no longer bound by your tendency to commit sin. You have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Heb 10:10) and reconciled to God through the death of His Son” (Ro 5:10).

Reconciliation

“All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isa 53:6). 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). 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). 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 lives in me" (:20).

It appears as though you're leading a double life. But that's not a good thing because "a double-minded man, [is] unstable in all his ways" (Jas 1:8). Therefore you have to stay focused. "The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Ro 8:6). "Set your mind on the things above" (Col 3:2). "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Ro 12:2). "As He is, so also are we in this world" (1Jn 4:17) and, of course, He is in heaven. To put it into practice we "present yourselves to God . . . as instruments of righteousness" (Ro 6:13). "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men" (Col 3:23). Even the twenty-four elders didn't take credit for what they did because they "cast their crowns before the throne"

(Rev 4:10). It is a matter of perspective giving credit to God who created it all. John said "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). "If we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord" (Ro 14:8).

Promise

How God justifies today is based upon how he declared Abraham righteous. God promised Abraham "in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Ge 22:18). God referenced the stars and stated "So shall your descendants be" (Ge 15:5). "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (:6). His hope was in the promise and his faith was in "the assurance of things hoped for" (Heb 11:1). Abraham had "the faith . . . that he might be the father of all who believe" (Ro 4:11). He believed that God was "able also to perform" (:21) it. Then God's ability produced Isaac and Abraham became "heir of the world" (:13).

There is more to this promise than meets the eye. It was also made to "'your seed,' that is, Christ" (Gal 3:16). "Scripture . . . preached the gospel beforehand" (:8) in the Old Testament which was a "covenant previously ratified by God" (:17). That is why it is not a blanket promise to heirs of the Jewish race as "to seeds" (:16) but rather to "the seed [who] would come to whom the promise had been made" (:19). The promise is the "blessing of Abraham which might come to the Gentiles" (:14). "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (:29). The promise is "given to those who believe" (:22). "It is those

who are of faith who are sons of Abraham" (:7), "blessed with Abraham, the believer" (:9), and ultimately "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (:26). This is the promise of the gospel which says "he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and . . . has passed out of death into life" (Jn 5:24). We therefore "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal 3:14).

The righteousness of God is revealed "through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe" (Ro 3:22). This results in justification and being written in the "book of life" (Rev 20:15).

Justification

What is justification composed of? You are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness" (Ro 3:24-25). Christ gave "His life a ransom for many" (Mt 20:28) and therefore "in Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). If you believe that he is the "propitiation for our sins" (1Jn 2:2) then "by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works" (Eph 2:8-9). You become "the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). God justifies you by declaring you righteous because you believe that Christ accomplished something for you since you couldn't do it yourself. To him who "believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as

righteousness" (Ro 4:5). Crediting is an accounting term denoting transferring value to someone's account. God deposits Christ's righteousness to your account if you believe which results in justification. In addition, just as Abraham was circumcised "having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph 1:13). God "gave to us the Spirit as a pledge" (2Co 5:5). The goal becomes being "conformed to the image of His Son" (Ro 8:29). This is accomplished "through sanctification by the Spirit" (2Th 2:13). "To him who overcomes, I will grant to eat of the tree of life which is in the Paradise of God" (Rev 2:7).

Gives Eternal Life

In nature a person tries to survive. Even Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Are you supposed to do anything necessary to survive? Jesus warns, "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it" (Mt 16:25). There was a situation in Smyrna where Jesus instructed through John, "You will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10). 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). So our focus should be on eternal things.

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).

Imparts Immortality

God "alone possesses immortality" (1Ti 6:16). "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). He "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (1Ti 1:10). How do you pursue and possess eternal life? "Those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Ro 2:7). "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (1Ti 6:12). "He who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal" (Jn 12:25). "There is no one who has left [house, family, business] . . . for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now . . . and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mk 10:29-30). "The dead will be raised imperishable, and we

will be changed . . . for this mortal must put on immortality" (1Co 15:52-53). Eternal life is having a relationship with God.

Moses spoke to God face to face. "Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out" (Ex 34:34). "Whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2Co 3:16). When Christ was resurrected "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mt 27:51). It is "a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Heb 6:19). "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace" (4:16). It is a proactive decision. James said, "Do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles" (Ac 15:19). "Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is the 'day of salvation'" (2Co 6:2).

Redeemed Us

Early church councils determined that Jesus was one with the Father, and as incarnated, was of the same essence as human beings. They described it as a hypostatic union. The spirit of man is mentioned in the New Testament, and on the cross, Jesus cried out, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Lk 23:46). Humans have a soul. Paul said "may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete" (1Th 5:23). In Gethsemane Jesus exclaimed, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death" (Mt 26:38). Hebrews explains "He had to be made like his bretheren in all things" (2:16) being "tempted in all things as we are"

(4:15). He shared in an existential humanity as experienced by normal people and was not given an "ideal" humanity where he would be immune from temptation. "Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (2:14). He "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us" (Col 2:14). An elder said, "The Root of David, has overcome" (Rev 5:5). Jesus said, "I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades" (1:18).

When you redeem something you buy it back as if retrieving it from a pawnshop. We've all seen movies where someone is kidnapped and a ransom is demanded. There is a price for releasing a captive. Mankind has been in bondage to sin. But Jesus "became a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) and we are "bought with a price" (1Co 6:20). His "death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions" (Heb 9:15) and it is he "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14). He is the "one mediator also between God and man . . . who gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:5-6). We are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Ro 3:24). "In Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). "You were not redeemed with perishable things . . . but with precious blood" (1Pe 1:19). "Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12).

God Guaranties

God has "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works" (2Ti 1:9). Israel didn't apprehend it because "they did not pursue it by faith, as though it were by works" (Ro 9:31). "Seeking to establish their own [righteousness], they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (10:3). "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph 1:4). He called us "according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2Ti 1:9). Jesus "was foreknown before the foundation of the world" (1Pe 1:19). But don't "neglect so great a salvation" (Heb 2:3). At a banquet there was a person "not dressed in wedding clothes" (Mt 22:12). The king said, "bind him . . . and throw him into outer darkness" (:13). "Many are called but few are chosen" (:14).

What guaranty is there that you can follow through with your commitment? Paul's confidence is "that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Php 1:6). It depends on God. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). It works because God has "sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts" (2Co 1:22) "as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). Because Jesus "continues forever . . . He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him" (Heb 7:24-25). "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Ro 8:35). Nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God" (:38). "This is the will of Him who

sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day" (Jn 6:39).

Where does the threat to a believer come from? It is because "they themselves are in the world" (17:11). Therefore Jesus asked the Father to "'keep them in Your name'" (:11). As a result, "'My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand'" (10:29). Paul was "convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2Ti 1:12). Peter said we "are protected by the power of God through faith" (1Pe 1:5). Also, "your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (5:8). "But He who is born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him" (1Jn 5:18). "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (4:4).

Increase in Knowledge

It is important for each person to take to heart what the Bible says. With Israel "their heart was not steadfast toward Him" (Ps 78:37) and they "did not believe in His wonderful works" (:32). The elders "had known all the deeds of the Lord which He had done in Israel" (Jos 24:31). "They quickly forgot His works" (Ps 106:13) "nor were they faithful in His covenant" (Ps 78:37). "The Lord said to Samuel, . . . 'they have rejected me'" (1Sa 8:7). Paul said that "he who rejects this is not rejecting man but God" (1Th 4:8). That is why John says of Jesus that "the Word was God" (Jn 1:1).

A writer on theology wrote that God has placed something in each man's heart to want to know him. Paul said "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ" (Php 3:8). In man's current state "we see in a mirror dimly" (1Co 13:12). I attended church once with a man I saw recently who told me that he had died during hip replacement surgery and went to heaven and saw his parents and others he knew. His wife prayed for him in the operating room and he returned to life and now gives his testimony at church meetings. When I asked, he explained that even though the people there didn't have earthly bodies you knew who they were. It's as if on earth you see as if in a mirror's reflection, but in heaven "face to face . . . [and] know fully just as I also have been fully known" (13:12). The purpose is to be "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10) and have "grace and peace be multiplied in you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2Pe 1:2). Paul prayed you would "abound still more and more in real knowledge and discernment" (Php 1:9) and that God may give you a "revelation in the knowledge of Him" (Eph 1:17). At the basic level you "come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Ti 2:4). More accurately you "believe and know the truth" (4:3) because you are "to be saved and come to the knowledge" (2:4). It is a "true knowledge" (Col 3:10) by understanding "the grace of God in truth" (1:6). Also, it is "the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (3:10). We then "attain to . . . knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man" (Eph 4:13).

Be Sanctified

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" (2Co 5:17). Must you, then, act differently? God told them, "Be holy, for I am holy" (Lev 11:44). To be a certain way means you have to live that way. How do you know what is required? Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (Jn 17:17). Sanctification in Greek means setting apart, and in Hebrew it is making something ceremonially clean. Jesus participated and said, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (:19). Jesus "that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Heb 13:12). In the Old Testament tabernacle "the blood of bulls and goats . . . [was used in] sprinkling those who have been defiled" (Heb 9:13). It was to "sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh" (:13). In the same way it is "by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled by His blood" (1Pe 1:2). Jesus did this for his church "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word" (Eph 5:26). Paul referred to "the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling" (1Co 1:2). He said "you were washed, . . . sanctified, . . . [and] justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (1Co 6:11). "Both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father" (Heb 2:11).

God provides sanctification at salvation in that "they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (Ac 26:18). "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb 10:10). To make it possible God said, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you" (Eze 36:26). He also said, "I will give them one heart . . . for their own good" (Jer 32:39). "The Lord your God will circumcise your heart . . . in order that you may live" (Dt 30:6). Will not "the blood of Christ . . . cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:13). Therefore "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Ro 12:1). God told Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them . . . and let them wash their garments" (Ex 19:10). A person must "possess his own vessel in sanctification" (1Th 4:4) and you must "sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts" (1Pe 3:15). Then "do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Ro 8:4) and "walk in newness of life" (6:4). "Walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light . . . and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1Jn 1:7). "May the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely . . . [so you will be] without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Th 5:23). "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14).

Must Persevere

Peter said "they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2Pe 2:20). "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1Jn 5:11). But Jesus said, "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up" (Jn 15:6). Branches "were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith" (Ro 11:20). You persevere by "keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith" (1Ti 1:19). Therefore be careful "that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God" (Heb 3:12). "The Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith" (1Ti 4:1) and will "have fallen from grace" (Gal 5:4). Jesus said, "There are some of you who do not believe" (Jn 6:64) and "many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore" (:66).

If "they are again entangled in [defilements] and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first" (2Pe 2:20). "It would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them" (:21). But "we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance" (Heb 3:14) and "our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (:6). Even Paul said "I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified" (1Co 9:27). "Jesus said to the twelve, 'You do not want to go away also do you?' Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God'" (Jn 6:67-69).