The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation

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## Recommended Reading

### Debates
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- Ballard-Nichol Debate, “Infant Baptism,” n. d. CRS
- Campbell-McCalla Debate
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- DeHoff-Davis Debate, 1982, DeHoff Publications
- Griffin-Woods Debate, 1958, Gospel Advocate (Hereafter GA) (Is Salvation Conditional?)
- Hardeman-Bogard Debate, 1982, GA
- Moffitt-Langford Discussion, Thrust, Vol. 2, No. 1
- Oliphant-Rice Debate, 1935, Firm Foundation
- Smith-Tant Debate, “Remission of Sins,” 1936, CRS
- Wilhite-Dew Debate, n. d.
- Woods-Nunnery Debate on Baptism and Apostasy, 1946

(Note: the debates marked CRS may be found at: [www.bible.acu.edu/crs/doc/bptm.html](http://www.bible.acu.edu/crs/doc/bptm.html))
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Alexander Campbell, Christian Baptism, GA, 1951
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Michael Green, Baptism: Its Purpose, Practice and Power, IVP, 1987 (favors sprinkling infants)
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J. W. Shepherd, Handbook on Baptism, GA, 1950

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“The Scheme of Redemption,” April 2001
“Baptism in the Plan of God,” April 2004

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Perry B. Cotham, Conversion, 1960

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Robert Shank, Elect in the Son, Wescott.
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David Steele and Curtis Thomas, The Five Points of Calvinism Defined Defended and Documented, Presbyterian Reformed Publ., 1971
Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, vol. 3 Soteriology, Eerdmans, 1997
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“Grace, Law and Love” in Spiritual Sword, January 1976
“A Child of God Can Be Lost Eternally,” in Spiritual Sword, April 1977
Sin and Its Consequences

Anyone who seeks to do the will of God ought to know what sin is and that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). This death is spiritual separation from God, the source of life (Isa. 59:1,2). There are various words used in the Greek NT to describe sin. They are:

* sin (αµαρτία): ‘a missing of the mark’ Rom. 6:23; James 4:17; 1 John 3:4; 5:16.
* error (πλανη): ‘a wandering, a forsaking of the right path’ Jas. 5:20; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 John 4:6; Rom. 1:27; 2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 11.
* iniquity (ανοµια): ‘lawlessness or wickedness, crookedness’ Matt. 7:23; 13:41; Tit. 2:14; 1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:7; Heb. 10:17.
* iniquity (αδικηµα): ‘a wrong, an injury, misdeed’ Acts 18:14; 24:20; Rev. 18:5.
* evil (πονηρεια): ‘bad, evil, worthless, wickedness’ Matt. 22:18; Mk. 7:22; Lk 11:39; Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 6:12.
* trespass (παραπτωµα): ‘a false step, a blunder, a deviation from uprightness or the truth, to fall’ Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35; Mark. 11:25,26; Gal. 6:1; James 5:16; Col. 2:13; Eph. 1:7; 2:1,5.
* transgression (παραβασις): ‘a going beyond the prescribed limits’ Rom. 4:15; 5:13,14,20; 7:7,13; Gal. 3:19.

The Scriptures teach us that sin is the breaking or transgression of the law (1 John 3:4); sin is lawlessness because the one who sins sets aside the law to do as he wishes. Sin is the breaking of God’s law and is an offense against God Himself (Gen. 39:9; Psa. 51:4). Sin is not only doing what God forbids; it is also the failure to do what God demands of us. ‘Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins’ (James 4:17). Many people will be lost at judgment for failure to obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9). All wrongdoing or unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

Various Kinds of Sin:

John said that worldliness is characterized by three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The very first sin of Adam and Eve, eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is an example of how temptation to sin may appeal to any or all of these categories (Gen. 3:1-19). Eve saw that the fruit was good for food (flesh), pleasing to the eye (eyes), and was able to make her wise (pride). Both Adam and Eve gave in to temptation. Their sin led to their spiritual death and to physical death coming upon all men (Rom. 5:12-17).

1. Works of the Flesh: ‘sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God’ (Gal. 5:19-21).

2. Wicked deeds: sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, male prostitution, homosexuality, theft, greed, drunkenness, slander, swindling. Those who commit such acts will not ‘inherit the kingdom of God’ (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

3. Godlessness and wickedness: failure to acknowledge or give thanks to God, idolatry, sexual impurity, homosexuality, shameful lusts, lesbianism, indecency, perversion, wickedness, evil, greed, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, God-hating, insolence, arrogance, boasting, disobedience to parents, senselessness, faithlessness, heartlessness, ruthlessness, and the toleration and approval of others’ wickedness (Rom. 1:18-32).
4. **Deeds of Darkness**: the hint of sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking (Eph. 5:1-12). Those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God and have the wrath of God coming on the disobedient.

5. **Earthly Deeds**: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed (which is idolatry). Also anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, and lying. The Christian must rid himself of these things.

6. **Godlessness in the last days**: 'For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power, and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these [men] also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. . . . But evil men and impostors will proceed [from bad] to worse, deceiving and being deceived' (2 Tim. 3:2-13).

**Sexual Sins**

1. **Sexual Immorality**. This is a broad term referring to all kinds of sexual intercourse before or outside of marriage (1 Cor. 6:12-20). This includes intercourse before marriage, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, multiple husbands or wives (Matt. 19:3-9). Those who practice sexual immorality will not enter the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21).

2. **Adultery**. Adultery is committed when a married person has sexual intercourse with someone other than the person to whom he is married. Those who commit adultery are guilty of breaking a covenant with their spouses. A single person commits adultery when he has sexual intercourse with a person who is married to someone else.

3. **Homosexuality**. Sexual intercourse between two persons of the same sex; those who practice it cannot enter heaven (Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:1-29; Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9,10; 1 Tim. 1:10). Sodomites are called ‘dogs’ in Deut. 23:17,18 and may be referred to in Rev. 22:15.

4. **Incest**. Illicit sexual intercourse performed between members of the same family (Lev. 18:6-10; 20:11-21; 1 Cor. 5:21; cf. Matt. 14:3,4).

5. **Bestiality**. Sexual intercourse with an animal (Ex. 22:19).

6. **Lust or Lasciviousness**. Jesus taught that the man who looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt. 5:27-30). The Christian is to avoid lust as well (Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5). Coveting another man’s wife is sin (Ex. 20:17), even though one may not touch her. The Christian must be careful to avoid activities that promote lasciviousness or lust. ‘Don’t be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals’” (1 Cor. 15:33).

**Sins of the Heart**

‘Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life’ (Prov. 4:23).

‘For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him’ (Matt. 12:34,35).

‘For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander’ (Matt. 15:19).

1. **Anger**. Jesus taught that anger with a brother is sinful (Matt. 5:21,22). Christians who have sinned against a brother are to reconcile quickly (Matt. 5:23-26). Christians who have been forgiven by God are expecting to be forgiving with others (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32). Jesus gives us instructions as to how to deal with a brother who has sinned against us (Matt. 18:15-17).

2. **Partiality**. Christians are to love and treat everyone with respect (James 2:1-10). God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:6,11).

3. **Envy or Jealousy**. Love is not jealous (1 Cor. 13:4). Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing the advantage or prosperity of others (Matt. 27:18; Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit.
Envy desires to deprive another of what he possesses; jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; James 3:14,16; Gal. 5:20; James 4:2).

4. **Prejudice.** Judging according to appearances is wrong; Christians are to judge righteously (John 7:24; cf. Luke 9:36-51). Since we do not know the motives of other people’s hearts, we must be careful not to judge. The Lord warns us against judging others (Matt. 7:1-5). This, however, does not mean that we should not take note of other people’s actions and deal with them accordingly (cf. Matt. 7:6, 15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 3 John 9,10).

5. **Thanklessness.** An unthankful heart leads to many sins (Rom. 1:21-32). One who is not thankful to God for kindnesses may turn his life to cynicism, grumbling, complaining and bitterness (See 1 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14; James 5:9; Jude 16).

6. **Pride or Arrogance.** Arrogance is the attitude of exalting oneself so that one is better than others. The ‘holier-than-you’ attitude is greatly offensive to God (Isa. 65:5). God hates haughty eyes (Prov. 6:16,17) and expects us to despise it as evil (8:13). Pride leads to disgrace (11:2; 29:23), breeds quarrels (13:10), and goes before destruction (16:18). God will humble the proud (Luke 1:51; Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). The Pharisee was not justified, even though he compared himself with a sinner (Luke 18:9-14). The pride of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4) led to his downfall.

7. **Selfish Ambition.** A contentious struggle for personal profit or power, with no redeeming hint of service to others. Selfish ambition battles others for immediate gains and empty honors, which have no eternal value (Luke 12:13-21; Rom. 2:8; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:17; 2:3,4; James 3:14-16).


9. **Greed or the Love of Money.** ‘The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs’ (1 Tim. 6:10). One cannot serve God and money at the same time (Matt. 6:19-24). Greed or covetousness is idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5).

**Sins of the Tongue**

1. **Lying.** The tongue can be used to hurt other people in a variety of ways: lying, bearing false witness, false accusations, and flattery. (See Psa. 34:13; Lev. 19:16; Ex. 20).


3. **Angry outbursts, unjust criticism, and ridicule.** See Prov. 14:17; 15:1; 29:22; The Christian is to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19,20), for a man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. When Jesus was reviled, he did not revile in return, leaving us an example to follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:21-25).

4. **Idle Talk.** (Matt. 12:36,37; James 3:10). Idle talk is unproductive; it does not bless or help anyone. It is negative and worthless. One who does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, has a vain religion (James 1:26,27). The Christian is instructed to use his tongue to edify others (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:5,6).

5. **Profanity.** ‘Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord Thy God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain’ (Ex. 20:7). To profane something is to treat what is holy and should be respected as if it were common. Profaning God’s name is to use it in an unholy manner. To speak of God, Christ, heaven or hell in such a way as to make it common is sinful. To swear, using God’s name, and not mean what you swear is taking the Lord’s name in vain (Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12).
Sexual things are often used in such a way as to be profanity. Marriage is holy, and the marriage bed is undefiled (Heb. 13:4). Dirty jokes, filthy language, and vulgar talk have no place in the conversation of Christians (Eph. 4:29; 5:3-5; Col. 3:4,5).

6. Sowing discord. God hates the spreading of strife among brothers (Prov. 6:16-19). The person who uses his tongue to incite anger and bitterness among brethren surely sins against God and against his brethren. Many will be hurt by his actions.

7. Boasting. Men should not boast of themselves, but rather boast that they know God (Jer. 9:23,24; cf. Prov. 20:30,31). Let him who glories, glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:29-31; Gal. 6:14). Boasting is a cause of strife and jealousy (1 Cor. 4:6,7; 2 Cor. 10:12-18). See also Rom. 1:30; James 3:5, 4:16.

Origin of Personal Sin
James 1:13-15 ’But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.’
Rom. 7:6-10 ’And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died.’

Personal Accountability for Sin
1. Each responsible for his own sin (Ezekiel 18; Rom. 6:23)
2. All have sinned (Rom. 3:10; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8,10)

Two Kinds of Sin
1. Unintentional Sins Can Be Forgiven (Lev. 4:2)
   - sins of ignorance
   - sins of weakness (Matt. 26:41; Heb. 4:15,16)
2. Presumptuous Sins Cannot Be Forgiven (Num. 15:29-31)
   - presumptuous (Ps. 19:13)
   - impenitence (Jer. 5:3; Luke 13:3; 2 Pet. 3:9)
   - blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (despising the Word, Num.15:30,31; see Matt. 12)
   - Sins unto death (1 John 5:16; Jer. 7:16-20)
   - willful sins (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31)

What Sin Will Do.
There are always consequences to sin.

1. Sin will deceive (Heb. 3:12-14; Eph. 4:22)
2. Sin will enslave (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16-18; 2 Pet. 2:18-22)
3. Sin will corrupt and defile us spiritually and physically (Tit. 1:15,16; Gal. 6:7,8)
4. Sin will harden (Tit. 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Eph. 4:19; Heb. 3:12-14; 6:4-6)
5. Sin will bring spiritual death (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1)
6. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1,2) no relationship

How God looks upon sin
1. Exodus 20:5 “jealous God, taking vengeance on them that hate me”
2. Sin is often called an abomination
3. Eph. 4:30 “grieve not the Holy Spirit”
4. Matt. 23:37-39 Jesus was broken hearted
It Is the Tendency of Man to Downplay Sin

A. Men have always thought that sin should be softened
   1. We call it mistake, difficulty, error in judgment, disappointment, an inappropriate action, problem, disease
   2. We wish to blame society, parents, and circumstances and remove responsibility from the perpetrator
   3. We offer so many excuses: (rationalizing away our sin)
      • “Just once won’t hurt”
      • “Everyone’s doing it”
      • “I can quit when I want to”
      • “Get with it, this is the 2000’s! Things have changed!”
      • “We were all in on it”
      • “She did it first” (Adam)
      • “I had to do it, or I would have lost face” (Saul)
      • “I didn’t use the proceeds anyway.” (Judas)

We often lie to ourselves about sin!
   1. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 “Do not be deceived.”
   2. 1 Cor. 15:33 “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.”
   3. Gal. 6:7,8 “Do not be deceived. God is not mocked”
   4. 1 John 1:8-10 “no sin? We are deceiving ourselves”
   5. In our hearts we know that sin is wrong, but we often would rather believe a lie

The Punishment of Sin
   1. Earth cursed because of sin (Gen. 3:17,18)
   2. Death entered the world through sin (Rom. 5:12)
   3. The sting of death is sin (1 Cor. 15:56)
   4. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4)
   5. Sin prevents people from entering heaven (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8,27)
   6. The punishment for sin is eternal (Matt. 25:41-46; Rev. 20:10-15; 21:8)

J.W. McGarvey said, “I wonder if any of us has ever realized what it is to commit sin. I have prepared sermons designed to set forth the enormity of sin: but I have every time felt that I made a failure. The pleasures of sin have blinded our eyes to its enormity. The journey of human life is strewn with tears; the whole earth on which we live has become dotted over with graveyards. The Word of God tells us that all this woe, pain, sorrow and death result from sin.”
Sacrifice and Atonement

The word “atone” means to make amends, to make matters right, to bring satisfaction to a wronged or offended persona, with the result that the estranged people are then “at one.” Moses tried to reconcile at peace two fighting men, to them “at one” (Acts 7:26). Paul urged Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony (Phil. 4:2). The word “atonement” is literally “at-one-ment,” and so it means agreement, concord, or reconciliation.¹

The Hebrew term translated “atonement” literally means a covering. It describes the pitch, which Noah put on the ark. It describes Jacob’s gift to pacify Esau: “I will appease him [cover his face] with the present that goes before me” (Gen. 32:20). Then the word came to mean a covering for sin, satisfaction, propitiation, and atonement.

The Relationship of Sin to the Atonement

Sin is an offense to God and causes men to be guilty before Him. Since God cannot tolerate sin (Deut. 32:1-4; Hab. 1:13; John 8:21), He had to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Alienation between God and man is the result of sin (Isa. 59:1-2). Since sin cannot enter heaven (John 8:21, 24; Rev. 21:8, 27), the most critical need of the universe was a reconciliation, a satisfaction, an atonement by which sinners may be restored to God’s favor now and ultimately to His presence.

The Relationship of the Extent of Sin to the Atonement

It was not only Adam and Eve who sinned against God. All people with the right use of their minds growing to know right from wrong have themselves sinned (Rom. 3:23). “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17). Only Jesus could meet the challenge: “Who of you convicts me of sin?” (John 8:46). Solomon asks: “Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Prov. 20:9). The universality of sin shows therefore that the doctrine of a limited atonement falls short. Only a universal atonement can be effective against the face of universal sin. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), and since He loves all men, His plan of atonement for sin must include all.

The Relationship of the Personal Nature of Sin to the Atonement

Sin is not inherited (Ezekiel 18:1-4), nor is it transferable. Rather, every sinner has been “drawn away by his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14). This being true, then no matter how broad is the atonement, it can only be applied as each individual responds personally to the provisions of the atonement. If we sin individually, we must have our individual sins atoned. If sin is personal, then the reconciliation must also be personal. The atonement then is futile without personal response. “So then each one of us shall give account of Himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

Heaven’s Problem and It’s Solution

The Problem:

The wages of sin is death and banishment from God (Rom. 6:23; Isa. 59:1-2). The Lord could not be a faithful and righteous being (Deut. 32:1-4) if He overlooked man’s iniquity and took Him to heaven regardless. Yet the Lord loved man, and yearned for his salvation (Ezek. 33:11; John 3:16). How could God remain just and at the same time justify sinners? This was heaven’s problem.

¹ This lesson is adapted from a lecture by Hugo McCord, “Atonement” in Fifty Years of Lectures, Vol. 1, 191-97.
Keeping Patriarchal and Mosaic Laws Insufficient

God's laws ordering animal sacrifice and prohibiting shedding human blood or eating any blood were essential to keep the patriarchs on the road to heaven; but if such observances could have atoned for sin, Heaven's problem would have been solved.

Cursed was anyone who despised Moses' law (Deut. 27:26; Heb. 10:26-27) and who failed to keep it; but even those who observed it blamelessly (Luke 1:6; Phil. 3:6) still had sins marked against them. It was not possible for the blood of animals to take away sin (Heb. 10:4). “For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law” (Gal. 3:21).

Believing and Obeying God and Christ Insufficient

A great act of faith is exemplified in the 85-year-old Abram when he believed that Jehovah would make his seed as numerous as the stars (Gen. 15:6). This act of faith in Abram is praised and set forth as an example to us in the New Testament (Rom. 4:16-24; Gal. 3:16-29). But if the work (cf. John 6:29) of believing and obeying were sufficient in and of themselves to atone for sin, Heaven's problem would have been solved.

The obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5), a faith which works by love (Gal. 5:6), are essential for anybody's going to heaven (Rev. 2:10), but actually nothing that any human can do will make him righteous. As important as is strict obedience to God's word, human obedience is not by itself the solution to Heaven's problem.

Performing Good Deeds Insufficient

As precious and as necessary in God's eyes (Matt. 25:31-46) as are good deeds, they cannot atone for man's sins. Obedience will not offset disobedience. An adulteress is still in her guilt though she is a kind and good neighbor to those in need. A thief is still guilty though he gives money to the poor. The man who prayed much to make up for his much cursing went unheard by God (James 1:26). Salvation by the debit and credit method is not the solution to Heaven's and the world's greatest problem.

Transferring Righteousness Impossible

Some have supposed that the solution God worked for man’s hopeless, condemned condition was a transfer of Christ's righteousness to human beings. If this were possible then Christ need never have left heaven, for He was righteous before He came to earth. Though Christ is our source of righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30), and though we are made righteous in Him (2 Cor. 5:21, 1 Pet. 2:24), there is no transfer of a state of righteousness from one person to another. We cannot be declared righteous without Christ's atonement, but neither scripture nor reason suggests that Jesus' state of being righteous has been applied to us.

Righteousness, the quality of being right, is a condition that exists by God's declaration of the fact, not by imputing somebody else's condition on the sinner. If a transfer of righteousness from one person to another were conceivable, surely God would have thought of it in order to spare His Son. Just as Adam's sin was not transferable, so Christ's righteousness was not portable. Something else had to be Heaven's solution.

Sending Christ as a Substitute

When in Heaven's council before the world began (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8), animal sacrifices in any age were by God declared insufficient, then God's only Son stepped forward and volunteered to become one flesh in order that He might die a sacrificial, substitutionary death.
“Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, ‘Sacrifice and offering thou has not desired, but a body Thou has prepared for me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou has taken no pleasure.’ Then I said, ‘behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God’” (Heb. 10:5-7). The Father explained there would be no compulsion; and should Jesus change His mind, He would not have to go through with the horrible ordeal. The Father’s promise to his Son was remembered by Jesus when He was on earth (John 10:17, 18).

Jesus was human like the rest of us. One can understand his dread of the cross when he “set his face” steadfastly to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51; 13:33). One can understand his dread when, on Peter’s suggestion that he not die and so tempting him to avoid death, Jesus called Peter Satan (Matt. 16:21f.). One can understand his dread of the cross at Gethsemane when his soul became exceedingly sorrowful. He prayed, “Father, save me from this hour,” but then he caught himself and finished by saying, “but for this cause came I unto this hour” (John 12:27). Jesus could have called twelve legions (72,000) angels (Matt. 26:53), but He did not. Deeply he wanted to avoid the cross’ misery and shame and prayed the Father to find some other way to atone for the sins of the world. There was none. If there had been, the all-wise Father would have found it.

Any other plan would compromise Heaven’s purity and the Father’s standard of justice. The only way God could remain just and yet justify sinners was for him to see the travail of Jesus’ soul with the sins of the world heaped upon him. Only then could the Father feel honorable in releasing sinners from guilt (Rom. 3:23-26; Isa. 53:10-12). On Calvary, mercy and truth met together, while righteousness and peace kissed each other (Psalm 85:10).

King Zaleucus: A Solution

King Zaleucus of Locris, about 500 B.C., had a problem similar to God’s. His law had decreed the loss of eyes for adultery. However, when his own son was guilty, the king was torn between upholding the law and being merciful to his son. He solved this problem by causing one of his son’s eyes to be removed and one of his own. Thus he maintained righteousness of law and at the same time left his son able to see.

Just as King Darius could not deliver Daniel from the lion’s den though he struggled for a whole day to find a way to rescue him, so the Lord found no means to save His Son from the shame and pain of the cross.

Yom Kippur and Crucifixion Day

The most solemn day among the Hebrews was the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. It was the only fast day prescribed in Moses’ law: “You shall afflict your souls” (Lev. 23:27). It was a Sabbath of Sabbaths, with both work and eating coming to a halt. On that day the high priest sprinkled animals’ blood on, and seven times before, the kapporeth, the covering of the Ark of the Covenant housed in the Holy of Holies. In a similar way, Jesus entered into the Holy of Holies, heaven itself, with his own blood, and applied its atoning power to the mercy seat (hilasterion), the place of satisfaction (Heb. 9:5). God received Jesus as an atoning sacrifice for sin, which placated or appeased His demand for justice and covered or cancelled the guilt of our sin.

False Theories on the Atonement

The death of Christ is highly significant in Christian doctrine but the understanding of His death has been reflected in widely divergent views. The following are the principal views regarding the death of Christ.
RANSOM TO SATAN THEORY
This theory was developed by Origen (A.D. 185-254), and it advocated that Satan held people captive as a victor in war. This theory, which was also held by Augustine, advocated that because Satan held people captive, a ransom had to be paid, not to God, but to Satan.

In response to this view it should be noted that God's holiness, not Satan's, was offended, and payment had to be made to God to avert His wrath. Furthermore, Satan did not have the power to free man, God alone had the power.

This theory is false because it makes Satan the benefactor of Christ's death. This view has too high a view of Satan; the cross was a judgment of Satan, not a ransom to Satan.

RECAPITULATION THEORY
The recapitulation theory, advanced by Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200?), taught that Christ went through all the phases of Adam's life and experience, including the experience of sin. In this way, Christ was able to succeed wherein Adam failed.

The element of truth is that Christ is known as the Last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), however, Christ had no personal encounter with sin whatsoever (1 John 3:5; John 8:46). The theory is incomplete in that it neglects the atonement; it is the death of Christ that saves, not His life.

COMMERCIAL THEORY
The commercial theory was set forth by Anselm (A.D. 1033-1109), who taught that through sin, God was robbed of the honor that was due Him. This necessitated a resolution that could be achieved either through punishing sinners or through satisfaction. God chose to resolve the matter through satisfaction by the gift of His Son. Through His death Christ brought honor to God, and received a reward, which He passed on to sinners. The gift was forgiveness for the sinner and eternal life for those who live by the gospel.

Although this view changed the focus from payment to Satan to a proper emphasis on payment to God, there are nonetheless problems with this view. It emphasizes God's mercy at the expense of other attributes of God, namely, justice or holiness. It also neglects the obedience of the life of Christ, and in addition, it ignores the vicarious suffering of Christ. Rather than emphasizing Christ died for the penalty of sin, this view embraces the Roman Catholic concept of penance, “so much satisfaction for so much violation.”

MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY
Abelard (A.D. 1079-1142) first advocated this theory that has since been taught by modern liberals such as Horace Bushnell and others of a more “moderate” liberal stance. The moral influence view was originally a reaction to the commercial theory of Anselm. This view taught that the death of Christ was not necessary as an expiation for sin, rather, through the death of Christ, God demonstrated His love for humanity in such a way that sinners’ hearts would be softened and brought to repentance.

The weaknesses of the moral influence view are obvious. The basis for the death of Christ is His love rather than His holiness; this view also teaches that somehow the moving of people's emotions will lead them to repentance. Scripture affirms that the death of Christ was substitutionary (Matt. 20:28), and thereby the sinner is justified before a holy God, not merely influenced by a demonstration of love.
ACIDENT THEORY

A more recent view, the accident theory, was advocated by Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), who taught that Christ became enamored with His messiahship. This theory saw Him preaching the coming kingdom and being mistakenly crushed in the process. Schweitzer saw no value to others in the death of Christ.

The deficiency of Schweitzer’s view centers on the suggestion that Christ’s death was a mistake. Scripture does not present it in that way. On numerous occasions Jesus predicted His death (Matt. 16:21; 17:22; 20:1719; 26:1-5); Christ’s death was in the plan of God (Acts 2:23). Moreover, His death had infinite value as a substitutionary atonement (Isa. 53:4-6).

EXAMPLE (MARTYR) THEORY

In reaction to the Reformers the example theory was first advocated by the Socinians in the sixteenth century and more recently by Unitarians. This view, which is a more liberal view than the moral influence view, suggests the death of Christ was unnecessary in atoning for sin; sin did not need to be punished. There was no relationship between the salvation of sinners and Christ’s death. Rather, Christ was an example of obedience and it was that example of obedience to the point of death that ought to inspire people to reform and live as Christ lived.

The weaknesses of this view are multiple. Christ is viewed only as a man in this theory; atonement is unnecessary yet Scripture emphasizes the need for atonement (Rom. 3:24). This view emphasizes Christ as an example for unbelievers, but 1 Peter 2:21 teaches that Christ’s example was for believers, not unbelievers.

GOVERNMENTAL THEORY

Grotius (1583-1645) taught the governmental theory as a reaction to the example theory of Socinus. The governmental theory served as a compromise between the example theory and the view of the Reformers. Grotius taught that God forgives sinners without requiring an equivalent payment. Grotius reasoned that Christ upheld the principle of government in God’s law by making a token payment for sin through His death. God accepted the token payment of Christ, set aside the requirement of the law, and was able to forgive sinners because the principle of His government had been upheld.

Among the problems with this view are the following. God is subject to change—He threatens but does not carry out (and in fact changes) the sentence. According to this view God forgives sin without payment for sin. Scripture, however, teaches the necessity of propitiating God (Rom. 3:24; 1 John 2:2)—the wrath of God must be assuaged. Also, substitutionary atonement must be made for sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24).
# Theories of the Atonement

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<td>Ransom to Satan</td>
<td>Origen (A.D. 184-254)</td>
<td>Ransom paid to Satan because people held captive by him.</td>
<td>God’s holiness offended through sin; cross was judgment on Satan, not ransom to Satan.</td>
<td>No known current advocates.</td>
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<td>Recapitulation</td>
<td>Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200)</td>
<td>Christ experienced all Adam did, including sin.</td>
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<td>None known.</td>
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<td>Commercial (Satisfaction)</td>
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<td>Elevates God’s honor above other attributes; ignores vicarious atonement.</td>
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<td>Moral Influence</td>
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<td>Governmental</td>
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<td>Accident</td>
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<td>Views Christ’s death as a mistake; denies substitutionary atonement.</td>
<td>None known.</td>
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Sacrifices

Patriarchal and Mosaical Sacrifices

The earliest narrative in Genesis records the fact, but gives no account of the origin and primary idea of the sacrifices Cain and Abel offered. The custom is sanctioned by the sacred writings, and later on the long-established custom was adopted and systematized in the Mosaic Law. The practice was almost universal.

Terms and Words Associated with Sacrifice for Sin

_Zebhāh_: a “slaughtered animal,” a “sacrifice,” general term for animals used in sacrifice, including burnt offerings, peace offerings, thank offerings, and all sacrifices offered to the Deity and eaten at the festivals. More particularly it refers to the flesh eaten by the worshippers after the fat parts had been burned on the altar and the priest had received his portion.

_Olāh_: a “burnt offering,” sometimes whole burnt offering. Derived from the verb _ālāh_, “to go up.” It may mean “that which goes up to the altar” or “that which goes up in smoke to the sky”; sometimes used synonymously with _kālā_ (which see). The term applies to beast or fowl when entirely consumed upon the altar, the hide of the beast being taken by the priest. This was perhaps the most solemn of the sacrifices, and symbolized worship in the full sense, i.e. adoration, devotion, dedication, supplication, and at times expiation.

_Ḥāṭa’āh, ḥāṭā’th_: a “sin offering,” a special kind, first mentioned in the Mosaic legislation. It is essentially expiatory, intended to restore covenant relations with the Deity. The special features were: (1) the blood must be sprinkled before the sanctuary, put upon the horns of the altar of incense and poured out at the base of the altar of burnt offering; (2) the flesh was holy, not to be touched by worshipper, but eaten by the priest only. The special ritual of the Day of Atonement centers around the sin offering.

_‘Āshām_: “guilt offering,” “trespass offering” (King James Version; in Isa 53:10, the King James Version and the Revised Version (British and American) “an offering for sin,” the American Revised Version margin “trespass offering”). A special kind of sin offering introduced in the Mosaic Law and concerned with offenses against God and man that could be estimated by a money value and thus covered by compensation or restitution accompanying the offering. A ram of different degrees of value, and worth at least two shekels, was the usual victim, and it must be accompanied by full restitution with an additional fifth of the value of the damage. The leper and Nazirite could offer he-lambs. The guilt toward God was expiated by the blood poured out, and the guilt toward men by the restitution and fine. The calling of the Servant an ‘āshām (Isa 53:10) shows the value attached to this offering.

_Shēlem, š’lāmām_: “peace offering,” generally used the plural, š’lāmām, only once shēlem (Am 5:22). These were sacrifices of friendship expressing or promoting peaceful relations with the Deity, and almost invariably accompanied by a meal or feast, an occasion of great joy. They are sometimes called _z’bhāmin_, sometimes _z’bhāh š’lāmām_, and were of different kinds, such as _z’bhāh ha-tōdāh_, “thank offerings,” which expressed the gratitude of the giver because of some blessings, _z’bhāh n’dhābhāh_, “free-will offerings,” bestowed on the Deity out of a full heart, and _z’bhāh nedēh_, “votive offerings,” which were offered in fulfillment of a vow.

_Kālā_: “whole burnt offering,” the entire animal being burned upon the altar. Sometimes used synonymously with _ōlāh_. A technical term among the Carthaginians.
Sacrifice is thus a complex and comprehensive term. In its simplest form it may be defined as “a gift to God.” It is a presentation to Deity of some material object, the possession of the offerer, as an act of worship. It may be to attain, restore, maintain or to celebrate friendly relations with the Deity. It is religion in action—in early times, almost the whole of religion—an inseparable accompaniment to all religious exercises. Few or many motives may actuate it. It was the one and only way of approach to God.

**The Sin Offering in the Law of Moses**

Specifically to atone for unwitting sins, sins of error (ṣʾghāghāh), mistakes or rash acts, unknown at the time, but afterward made known. There were gradations of these for several classes of offenders: the anointed priest (Lev 4:3-12), the whole congregation (Lev 4:13-21), a ruler (Lev 4:22-26), one of the common people (Lev 4:27-35), forswearing (5:1), touching an unclean thing (Lev 5:2) or the uncleanness of man (Lev 5:3), or rashly swearing in ignorance (Lev 5:4).

### Conscious and Willful Violations

For conscious and willful violations of the Law, no atonement was possible, with some exceptions, for which provision was made in the guilt offerings. This sin of the “high hand” reflects an attitude of rebellion both during and after the sin, an unwillingness to repent or to change one’s mind about the sin (Num. 15:27-31). Such willful sin was blasphemous toward God, which may help one understand the thinking behind Jesus’ statements on the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:22-32). It might also explain the reason why there is no longer a sacrifice in the blood of Christ for continued willful sin (Heb. 10:26-31). John reveals that there is a sin unto death, for which Christians are not to pray for forgiveness (1 John 5:14-16). God told Jeremiah, when the people had become deeply involved in idolatry, “As for you, do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with me, for I will not hear you” (Jer. 7:8-20; 14:10-12).

### On the Day of Atonement:

On the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:1-28) Aaron must take a bullock for himself and house, two he-goats for the people, present the goats at the sanctuary, cast lots, one for Yahweh, as a sin offering, the other for Azazel, to be sent into the wilderness. The bullock was killed, sweet incense was burned within the rail, blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat and before it seven times. The one he-goat was killed and a similar ceremony was performed. Blood must be put on the horns of the altar and sprinkled seven times about it. The other goat was presented, hands were laid on it, the sins of all confessed and put upon the goat, and it was sent into the wilderness. The carcass of the bullock and he-goat were burned without the camp.

### The Relation of Christ’s Sacrifice to Salvation

The saving benefits specified in the New Testament as resulting from the sacrificial death of Christ are as follows:

1. **Redemption from the Curse of Sin**

Redemption or deliverance from the curse of sin: This must be the implication in Jesus’ words, “The Son of man also came ... to give his life a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45 parallel Mt 20:28). Man is a captive in sin, the Father sends His Son to pay the ransom price for the deliverance of the captive, and the Son’s death is the price paid. Paul also uses the words “redeemed” and
“redemption” in the same sense. He asserts that we are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation ... in his blood” (Rom 3:24, 25). Here the apostle traces justification back to redemption as the means for securing it, and redemption back to the “blood” (Christ’s death) as the cause of its procurement. That is, Christ’s death secures redemption and redemption procures justification. In Galatians (3:13), he speaks of being redeemed “from the curse of the law.” The law involved man in a curse because he could not keep it. This curse is the penalty of the broken law which the transgressor must bear, unless deliverance from said penalty is somehow secured. Paul represents Christ by His death as securing for sinners deliverance from this curse of the broken law (compare Gal 4:5 for the same thought, though the word “curse” is not used). Paul also emphasizes the same teaching in Ephesians and Colossians: “In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses” (Eph 1:7; compare Col 1:14). Paul teaches in 1 Tim 2:6 that Christ gave “himself a ransom for all.” This is the only New Testament passage in which occurs the strong word antilutron for “ransom.”

The author of Hebrews asserts that Christ by the sacrifice of Himself “obtained eternal redemption” for man (9:12). John says that Christ “loosed (λύσα) us from our sins by his blood” (Rev 1:5). This idea in John is akin to that of redemption or deliverance by ransom. Peter teaches the same truth in 1 Pet 1:19. So, we see, Jesus and all the New Testament writers regard Christ’s sacrifice as the procuring cause of human redemption.

2. Reconciliation

The idea of reconciliation involves a personal difference between two parties. There is estrangement between God and man. Reconciliation is the restoration of favor between the two parties. Jesus does not utter any direct message on reconciliation, but implies God’s repugnance at man’s sin and strained relations between God and the unrepentant sinner (see Lk 18:13). He puts into the mouth of the praying tax-gatherer the words, ‘God be propitious to me’ (see Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon, hilaskomai), but Jesus nowhere asserts that His death secures the reconciliation of God to the sinner.

Paul, however, does. “For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son,” etc. (Rom 5:10). There can be no doubt from this passage that Paul thought of the death of Christ as the procuring cause of reconciliation. In Eph 2:13, 14, 18 Paul makes the cross of Christ the means of reconciliation between the hostile races of men. Paul reaches the climax in his conception of the reconciliation wrought by the cross of Christ when he asserts the unifying results of Christ’s death to be cosmic in extent (Eph 1:10).

The author of Hebrews also implies that Christ’s death secures reconciliation when he regards this death as the ratification of the “better covenant” (8:6 ff), and when he plays on the double meaning of the word (diathēkē, 9:15 ff), now “covenant” and now “will,” “testament.” The death of Christ is necessary to secure the ratification of the new covenant which brings God and man into new relations (8:12). In 2:17 the author uses a word implying propitiation as wrought by the death of Christ. So the doctrine of reconciliation is also in the Epistle to the Hebrews. John teaches reconciliation with God through Christ our Advocate, but does not expressly connect it with His death as the procuring cause (1 Jn 2:1, 2). Peter is likewise silent on this point.

3. Remission
Reconciliation implies that God can forgive and has forgiven. Jesus and the New Testament writers declare the death of Christ to be the basis of God’s forgiveness. Jesus in instituting the memorial supper said, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins” (Mt 26:28). Paul leaves no doubt as to the connection between man’s forgiveness by God and Christ’s sacrifice for him. This idea is rooted in the great passage on justification (Rom 3:21 through 5:21; see especially 4:7); is positively declared in Eph 1:7; Col 1:14. The author of Heb teaches that the shedding of Christ’s blood under the new covenant is as necessary to secure forgiveness as the shedding of animal’s blood under the old. John also implies that forgiveness is based on the blood (1 Jn 1:7-9).

4. **Cancellation of Guilt**

True reconciliation and forgiveness include the canceling of the offender’s guilt. Jesus has no direct word on the cancellation of guilt. Paul closes his argument for the universality of human sin by asserting that “all the world may be brought under the judgment of God” (the King James Version “guilty before God,” Rom 3:19). Thayer says this word “guilty” means “owing satisfaction to God” (liable to punishment by God). But in Rom 8:1, 3 Paul exclaims, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus ... God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin.” The guilt, or exposure of the sinner to God’s wrath and so to punishment, is removed by the sin offering which Christ made. This idea is implied by the author of Hebrews (2:15), but is not expressed in Peter and John.

5. **Justification or Right Standing with God**

Right standing with God is also implied in the preceding idea. Forgiving sin and canceling guilt are the negative, bringing into right standing with God the positive, aspects of the same transaction. “Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). In this passage Paul makes justification the divine purpose of the sacrificial death of Christ.

6. **Cleansing or Sanctification**

Jesus does not connect our cleansing or sanctification with His death, but with His word (Jn 17:17). The substantive “cleansing” (καθαρίσμος) is not used by Paul, and the verb “to cleanse” (καθαρίζω) occurs only twice in his later letters (Eph 5:26; Tit 2:14). He does use the idea of sanctification, and in Rom 6 through 8 teaches that sanctification is a logical consequence of justification which is secured by Christ’s sacrificial death. In Phil 3:10, 11, he views Christ’s death and resurrection as the dynamic of transformation in the new life. The author of Hebrews (1:3; 9:14, 22, 23; 10:2), following his Old Testament figures, uses the idea of cleansing for the whole process of putting away sin, from atonement to sanctification (see Westcott, *Commentary*, in the place cited.). He makes Christ’s death the procuring cause of the cleansing. John does the same (1 Jn 1:7; Rev 7:14).

7. **Sonship**

Divine sonship of the believer is also traced by Paul to the sacrificial death of Christ (Rom 8:17), though this thought is not found in other New Testament writers. ³

The Grace of God

Someone has taken the word "G-R-A-C-E" and made the acrostic "God's Redemption At Christ's Expense." This is a fairly accurate description of grace. The word grace (χαρίς) means "favor." One who has the love, blessing and favor of another may be said to be in the "good graces" of his benefactor. The distinguishing factors of God's grace are twofold: (1) that God's grace is given as a gift and is not earned; and (2) that God's grace is undeserved.

God's grace is a gift and not earned
Rom. 4:4 "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."
Eph. 2:1-10 "For it is by grace you saved through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."
2 Tim. 1:9 "who saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace"
Tit. 3:3-7 "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."
Grace is not a wage for our labors, a prize for our winning a competition or an award for our meritorious efforts. It is a gift. When a man can earn no wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award, yet receives a wondrous gift, he has been given unmerited favor or undeserved kindness.

God's grace is undeserved
Rom. 5:6-8 "when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. . .God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
1 Tim. 1:12-16 "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life."

What Forgiveness Means:
Psalm 32:1,2 "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!"
Forgiveness is not forgetting but "forgetting against." When God forgives us, He no longer counts our sins against us (2 Cor. 5:19) so that we might be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:20). Men cannot undo the past, but God can forget our past sins against us so that we are no longer guilty. Psalm 85:2,3 says of God: "You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger."

1. Forgiveness frees one from the bondage of sin.
John 8:34 "everyone who sins is a slave to sin"
Rom. 6:16 "you are slaves of the one you obey, whether to sin. . ."
Rom. 7:14-20 "I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin"
Rom. 8:2 "through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death."
Rom. 6:3-7 in baptism "our old self was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who died is freed from sin."
2. **Forgiveness releases one from the debt incurred by sin**
   - Matt. 18:23-35 forgiven debt is one that no longer must be paid
   - Rom. 6:23 "the wages of sin is death" cf. Ezek. 18:4
   
   Sin releases one from guilt in spite of what one may deserve. Forgiveness should not be confused with injustice, as when a guilty person escapes punishment through lies or bribes. Forgiveness is a pardon; the sin was real but now no longer matters because the price was paid in the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:5; Acts 20:28).

3. **Forgiveness creates the opportunity for a new beginning.**
   
   2 Cor. 5:17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Forgiveness means that the old record is clear, and one is looked upon as if he had never sinned. His past no longer matters to God, for he has died to sin and has undergone a new birth (John 3:3-7; Rom. 6:3-7). With the past buried by the love of God, God and man can now start a new covenant relationship, brought about by the blood of Jesus Christ. This new birth allows a man to start over with God. In this new relationship in Christ, he can think, act and speak like Christ.

4. **Forgiveness is the means by which God reconciles the world.**
   
   2 Cor. 5:19 says "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them." Reconciliation is the bringing back into friendship a world that was alienated by sin. Sin separates men from God (Isa. 59:2), so that God no longer hears man's prayers. Forgiveness restores the relationship by removing the cause of the separation, i.e., sin. The sin gone, man can once again approach God through Christ. Forgiveness is better than merely forgetting, for by forgiving us God demonstrates His love to us (Rom. 5:6-8) in that He sent Jesus to die for us. We at that time were powerless, ungodly, and sinful.

   The cross of Jesus reaches out to us in love and "compels us" to want to love Him and serve Him. "And he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:14,15).

**God's Grace is Greater than Our Sins**

- 1 Tim. 1:12-16 The grace of God and His unlimited patience was able to forgive the worst of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul.
- 1 Cor. 6:9-11 Though men are caught up in the worst of sins, God's power is able to wash, sanctify and cleanse them.
- 1 John 3:18-20 Though our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.
- 1 John 1:7-9 The blood of Christ can and does forgive all sin.

**Meeting God's Conditions Does Not Negate the Grace of God**

- Num. 21:6-9 looking upon the bronze serpent
- Joshua 6:2,16,20 God gave Jericho, but the people had to take it
- 2 Kings 5:1-14 Naaman dipping in the Jordan to be healed
- John 9:6,7, 10-12 The blind man who washed in the pool of Siloam
- John 3:3-7 except a man is born of water and the Spirit
- Titus 3:3-7 washing of regeneration is how the grace of God works
- Col. 3:12-13 God is active and we are passive in baptism
Justification, Sanctification, Redemption, and Reconciliation

The Scriptures use four technical terms, which are associated with salvation. Each word reveals an important picture in our salvation. Because of the rich heritage found in each term, Bible students should understand what it means to be justified, sanctified, redeemed and reconciled in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Justification

To justify (*dikaioo*) is to “vindicate, to acquit, or to pronounce and treat as righteous” (Rom. 2:13; 3:20, 24, 28; Tit. 3:7). A justified person has been “set free” or “made pure” from any sin or guilt of sin (Acts 13:38, 39; Rom. 6:7). In secular Greek, the word originally described the efforts of a tyrannical king to justify his outrageous acts. To justify mean to vindicate actions that did not really deserve vindication. Later the word came to mean that which is far or right, and this was extended to include efforts to establish righteousness. Justification means that I stand before God “just-as-if-I’d” never sinned.

Only contrite persons can be justified before God (Luke 18:10-14).

The book of Romans gives us the fullest treatment on the nature of our justification:

- √ Rom. 2:12; 3:20 the Law of Moses can justify no one
- √ Rom. 3:24-26 Justification is possible only through the grace of God revealed in Christ
- √ Rom. 1:17; 3:28; 4:5; 5:1 we are justified by faith.

Sanctification

To sanctify (*hagiodzo*) is “to set apart for a holy purpose, to make holy.” The “holy” has been set apart from the common and isolated for God's service (2 Tim. 2:19-21). God transforms common sinners into holy people who serve Him (1 Cor. 6:11). There are two aspects to our sanctification:

1. That which God does in our salvation
2. That which God expects of us in separating from the world and sin (2 Cor. 6:17-18; 1 Pet. 1:14-19)

God desires to sanctify us entirely (1 Thess. 5:23-24). We are sanctified by:

- √ The truth (John 17:17, 19)
- √ The washing of water with the word (Eph. 5:25-26)
- √ The offering of the body of Jesus (Heb. 10:10)
- √ The blood of the covenant (Heb. 10:29; 13:12)
- √ The calling of the gospel (1 Cor. 1:2)

Redemption

To redeem (*exagoradzo*) is “to ransom, to buy back,” so as to deliver someone from slavery or a curse. In Galatians 3 and 4, the believer is pictured as having been redeemed from the law’s curse and given full rights as a child of promise. Jesus paid the price of redemption (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45). That redemption price was the “precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect” (1 Pet. 1:18, 19). Redemption is a release from all wickedness (Tit. 2:14) so that we may serve the living God.

A person captured in war and released through the payment of a ransom by another Roman citizen was obligated to the one who ransomed him until the price had been repaid. We have been
ransomed at incalculable cost and are forever in debt to God (Rom. 6:12-14). It is in our surrender to God and bondage to Him that we find our freedom. God paid the price to win our release. Redemption suggests our helplessness to save ourselves and our utter dependence upon God (Rom. 5:6-10).

**Reconciliation**

To reconcile (*alloso*) is to focus on a change in our personal relationship with God, whereby we are once again made friends and close to God. The Bible pictures sin as an impenetrable barrier to our relationship with God (Isa. 59:1-2). Habakkuk 1:13 says, “You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong.” Sin is the destroyer of our relationship with God and makes us hostile toward this One who will one day be our judge. God wishes to make those who are His enemies His children and to bring them near by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20-21). The death of Jesus is a demonstration of His love, which opens the door for our relationship once again with God. God has acted in Christ to accomplish reconciliation, so that with our sins no longer counted against us we are no longer enemies of God (2 Cor. 5:19-21).

In pagan religions, human beings might bring offerings designed to win the affection of some wounded deity (cf. Naaman in 2 Kings 5). Only in the Christian faith, however, does God take the initiative to win, at terrible cost, the affection of those who have wounded him by their sins.
Faith and Salvation

Salvation is “By Faith”

- Rom. 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- John 3:14-16 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
- John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.
- John 8:24 “I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”
- Rom. 10:9-10 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.
- Eph. 2:8-10 For 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, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.
- 1 John 5:1 Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

Understanding the words “faith” and “believes.”

The Bible often uses words in a figure of speech as “package words,” i.e., where some part of a thing is put for the whole thing. This figure is called synecdoche. For instance:
- when we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11), we are using bread as a figure or representative for all food.
- The “breaking of bread” in Luke 24:35 refers not merely to bread but to an entire meal.
- In Hebrews 2:9 the word “taste” refers to an entire experiencing of death.
- In Psalm 139:2 God’s knowledge of us is referred to but not limited to his knowledge of us when we “sit down” and “rise up.” These phrases refer to all the acts of ordinary life from the time one rises to the time one lies down.
- Mark 11:23 uses “removing mountains” as one kind of impossibility for all kinds of things impossible to man.
- The word “flesh” is sometimes used in reference to the whole man (Psalm 56:4; John 1:14). “Flesh and blood” is used to refer to the whole physical nature of a person (1 Cor. 15:50) or the human as opposed to God (Matt. 16:17).
- When we hear the proverb, “Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence” (Prov. 106), we realize that the head and the mouth refer not merely to body parts but to entire people.
So it is with “faith” and “believing.” Faith is a term referring to more than mental agreement that a conviction is true. Paul congratulated the Thessalonians for their “work of faith” (1 Thess. 1:3). He knew that what mattered is “faith working by love” (Gal. 5:6). His goal was to bring about the “obedience of faith” (Rom. 1:5; 16:26-27). One may agree that Jesus is the Christ, but one is hardly a believer who will not repent or has not repented. One who believes that “faith alone” saves must always take it back when the necessity of repentance or loving God is mentioned. Consequently, those passages that mention faith or believing are actually referring to an obedient trust, which commits itself to the Lord.

In John 12:42-43 John observed, “Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.” The faith one will not confess is inadequate to possess the approval of God. If one must confess his faith in Christ, then salvation is not by “faith only” (Rom. 10:9, 10). If one must obey the commandment to love the Lord without all our hearts in order to go to heaven (Matt. 22:37-39; 1 Cor. 16:22), then salvation is not by “faith alone.” If repenting is necessary for one to be forgiven (Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 2 Pet. 3:9), then salvation cannot be by faith alone.

Those who adopt the “faith only” doctrine nearly always employ it to deny the necessity of baptism to salvation, but they do not employ it to deny the necessity of confessing, loving God completely, or repenting. If indeed any one of these (confession, repentance, or love) is necessary, then we see no reason why the positive requirement of faith cannot also include baptism.

Repentance and love require far more of an individual than baptism does. They are requirements for a lifetime, whereas baptism is a once-for-all-time act. Paul united belief to baptism in Galatians 3:26-27: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Paul understands baptism to be an act demonstrating the presence of faith. The idea of an unbaptized believer is never contemplated in Scripture. In Colossians Paul describes baptisms being buried and raised with Christ “through faith in the working of God,” as the time when God made us alive and forgave our sins (2:12-13). Baptism is tied with faith in Christ so closely that the New Testament never contemplates believer approved by God who has not been baptized.

This is why the belief God desires is an obedient faith (Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5), a living faith (James 2:14-26), and a faith that works by love (Gal. 5:6).

Believing is an ongoing, lifelong action. The “one who believes” must continue to believe in order to continue to have life (John 5:24). The Hebrew writer warns in Hebrews 3:12-14, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called “Today,” so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.”

Children of God can cease to believe and can fall away from God with evil hearts. They can lose their salvation should they cease to believe. The whole context of this passage suggests the necessity of perseverance for one to remain right with God (Heb. 10:26ff. 12:1-2).

The Teaching of Hebrews 11

The faith which God approves is a living, expressed faith rather than a dead, inactive one. It was by their expressed faith that the early believers gained that approval (Heb. 11:2, 6, 39).

- By faith Abel offered (11:4)
- By faith Noah...in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household (11:7)
• By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance (11:8)
• By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac (11:1)
• By faith Moses...refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and chose to endure ill treatment with the people of God (11:24-25)
• By faith he (Moses) kept the Passover (11:28)
• By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land (11:29)
• By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days (11:30)
• By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish...after she had welcomed the spies in peace (11:31)
Repentance and Confession

The Nature and Need for Repentance

- Luke 13:3,5 “unless you repent, you too will perish”
- Acts 2:38 “repent, and be baptized every one of you, so that your sins may be forgiven”
- Acts 3:19 “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out”
- Acts 11:18 “God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life”
- Acts 17:30,31 “now he (God) commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.”
- 2 Pet. 3:9 “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

What Repentance Is:

Repentance is ‘a change of heart and mind that leads to a change in life and behavior.’ In Matt. 21:28-32, Jesus tells of a certain man who told his son to work in the vineyard. The son said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he repented and went. He changed his mind about the matter and did as his father told him. Repentance is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of life and behavior.

What Repentance Is Not:

Repentance is not the same thing as regret. Judas regretted (μεταμελέω: had remorse or emotional sorrow) that he had betrayed the Lord with a kiss and sold him for thirty pieces of silver, but he did not return to the Lord in obedience (Matt. 27:3-5). Judas went and hanged himself. Peter, on the other hand, wept bitterly but repented (μετανοεῖ: changed his mind). Peter, after he was turned again (Luke 22:32), came back and served the Lord.

Repentance is not merely being sorry for sin. While godly sorrow produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10), sorrow alone is not a change of heart and mind. There are fruits that show repentance (Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:20). Some think that because they have walked down an aisle confessing sin or have given their hand to a preacher in sorrow, they have repented. Repentance is more than merely being sorry.

Repentance is more than stopping the wrongdoing. While repentance demonstrates itself in the fact that a person ceases to do evil, it also means that one turns his heart to the Lord and embraces His will completely. There are those who sweep the house clean but do not fill their lives with the Lord (Matt. 12:43-45). One may cease to do evil, but real repentance means that one lovingly learns to observe everything Jesus commands.

Repentance is not pretense. One may pretend at righteousness, but the Lord knows every man’s heart. One may attend the meetings of the church; but if he does not clean up his life, he has not repented. Pretending service to God is hypocrisy.

Repentance Begins by a Change of Heart toward Sin

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against God. He is sorry that he hurt and grieved God by his transgression of God’s law and realizes that Jesus suffered on the cross for his own sin (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24). It is this kind of godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). God’s kindness and grace leads us to repent (Rom. 2:4). Sin so grieves God that it breaks our relationship with Him (Isa. 59:1,2). The Ephesians made known their repentance by ‘bringing their books together and burning them in the sight of all’ (Acts 19:19).

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against others. He realizes that not only has he sinned against God but that his sins have caused other people to suffer. God gave his laws for our good (Deut. 6:24; 10:13); they
protect us from the evil of other people. We hurt others with our tongues, with our immoral acts, and with our example. Jesus said that one who sets a stumbling block before a little one sins grievously (Matt. 18:6-9).

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against himself. David said, 'For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me' (Psalm 51:3). The consequent guilt that comes from sin can be a heavy burden (Psalm 32:1-5). Like the prodigal son, those who sin reap a sense of great unworthiness (Luke 15:11-24).

Furthermore, those who sow to the flesh will from the flesh reap corruption (Gal. 6:7,8). He who sins against the wisdom of God injures himself (Prov. 8:36). Solomon said, 'His own iniquities with capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin' (Prov. 5:22).

A penitent person is sorry for the false teaching he taught or believed. False doctrine is like a gangrene that corrupts and destroys (2 Tim. 2:17). Those who support others who teach false doctrines participate in their evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Repentance Continues in the Turning of the Heart toward the Right

Repentance is not only a turning away from sin, it is also a turning toward God. A penitent person’s heart is changed toward loving the things God loves and wanting to please Him in every respect. When the prodigal son 'came to his senses,' he left the far country and came home to the Father (Luke 15:11-24). The sinner cries out, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me' (Psalm 51:10). There is a resolution to do right within the heart of a penitent man. The consequence to this is that not only does he become loyal to what is right, he also hates what is wrong (Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 5:21,22; Psalm 97:10). The penitent Thessalonians demonstrated their repentance by turning from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9).

The penitent believer is willing to take up daily the cross of Christ and follow the Lord (Luke 9:23). He is willing to lose his life for the sake of Christ that he may find it eternally. He is neither ashamed of neither Christ nor his teachings (Luke 9:26; Rom. 1:16). His heart has so changed that he is determined to do everything the Lord asks him to do.

One may cut down a tree, but chances are that it will sprout again. To be rid of it, one must dig out the roots. So it is with sin. It is not enough to quit committing a foul deed; the heart must be changed, for it is from the heart that foul deeds arise (Matt. 15:18).

Zacchaeus the tax collector set a wonderful example of repentance in Luke 19:1-10. Not only was his heart changed into gladness, but he vowed: 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount' (Luke 19:8). Zacchaeus was willing to restore fourfold whatever he had wrongfully taken. Those who turn to the Lord want to restore whatever loss they have caused others if and when they are able to do so.

Repentance Completes Itself in a Change of Life and Behavior.

John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him for baptism that they should 'produce fruit keeping with repentance' (Matt. 3:8). Jesus does not leave us where he finds us. He told the woman caught in the act of adultery to ‘go now and leave your life of sin’ (John 8:11). Jesus upbraided the Pharisees and leaders of his day because they did not repent at his preaching. He said, ‘The men of Nineveh will stand up at judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here’ (Matt. 12:41). In Jonah’s time Nineveh, from the king to the beasts, fasted, wore sackcloth and sat in ashes to show their penitence over their sin (Jonah 3:5-9). The penitent son of the vineyard owner changed his mind and went to work in the vineyard (Matt. 21:28-30). Christians do not merely talk the talk, they walk the walk. James urged the Christians, ‘Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says’ (Jas. 1:22). No one is blessed who sees that he needs to change but fails to change (Jas. 1:23-25; 4:17).
Some People Harden Themselves and Refuse to Repent

"See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness’ (Heb. 3:12,13).

Jeremiah dealt with people in his time who had 'made their faces harder than rocks; they have refused to repent’ (Jer. 5:3). Sin deadens the conscience and calluses the soul (1 Tim. 4:2; Eph. 4:19). This is why the appeal to repent is an urgent one. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30); He is not willing that any man should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). The person who goes on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth no longer has a sacrifice for sins in Christ Jesus, but may expect the judgment of flaming fire (Heb. 10:26-31).

God cannot force you to repent, but he can appeal to you. If there is no repentance, there can be no pardon. He promises forgiveness to the penitent but does not promise tomorrow to the procrastinator (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7).

Repentance is perhaps the Hardest of God’s Commands to Obey

Men are quick to seek to justify themselves, but they are slow to recognize and to acknowledge that they are wrong. One basic difference between Saul and David was that Saul generally sought to justify himself, whereas David could be brought to repentance.

The Implications of Repentance

1. That man is a free moral being, completely capable of obeying God’s commands. Man is able to change; otherwise God is demanding that man do what he cannot do.
2. That the individual standing in need of repenting is personally responsible for his own sins and may not blame others for his own faults.
3. That repentance involves the whole heart: emotions, reasoning, and the will. Repentance is the deliberate choice of a persuaded individual, not the temporary response of an emotional experience.

Confession

The word “confess” (homologeo) means literally “to speak the same thing” and so comes to mean “to assent, accord, or agree with.” In relation to salvation, confession is used in two different ways:

1. To declare openly and freely because of one’s deep conviction of the facts—what one believes.
2. To admit oneself guilty of what one is accused as the result of inward conviction—what sin one has committed.

Confession of Christ

Matt. 10:32; Luke 12:8 speaks of the confession of faith in, allegiance to, and service to Christ as one’s Master and Lord and as the Son of God. One’s public acknowledgment of Jesus Christ is the basis for Jesus’ own acknowledgement of that believer to God and in the presence of heaven.

Matt. 16:15-17 reflects a public declaration: He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

Acts 8:36-38: And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” [Some
manuscripts add all or most of verse 37: And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he replied, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

1 Cor. 12:3 says: Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.

Phil. 2:9-11 says: Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The rise of heresy late in the first century seems to have prompted additional affirmations about Christ. John urged Christians to confess that Jesus has come in the flesh and is the Son of God (1 John 4:1-3, 13-15).

Confession of Sin
Numerous Old Testament passages stress the importance of the confession of sin within the experience of worship. Leviticus speaks of ritual acts involving such admission of sin: the sin (or guilt) offering (5:5 – 6:7) and the scapegoat that represents the removal of sin (16:20-22).

The Old Testament also provides examples of an individual confessing sin on behalf of the people as a whole (Neh. 1:6; Dan. 9:20) or the collective response of the worshiping congregation (Ezra 10:1; Neh. 9:2-3). Frequently, confession refers to the individual acknowledgment of sin by the penitent sinner (Psalm 32:5; Prov. 28:13; cf. Psalms 38 and 51 that also speak of individual confessions).

In the New Testament, John’s followers were baptized, confessing their sins (Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:6). Paul’s converts at Ephesus made similar confessions and burned their books of magic (Acts 19:18-19). God is faithful to forgive those who confess their sins (1 John 1:9). James admonished his readers not only to pray for one another but also to confess their sins (James 5:16). Jesus taught his followers to pray for forgiveness (Matt. 6:12).

Values of Confessing Sin:
2. Confession involves humility and submission to God’s way and His will. God can never be the Lord of one’s life, if one is unwilling to admit his sin. A self-righteous man has no need for God (Luke 18:9-14; cf. Matt. 5:3).
3. Confession relieves the conscience of a festering wound that can only get worse (Psalm 32:3-5; James 5:16). Unresolved sin multiplies pain; it does not go away (cf. Psalm 38).
4. Confession opens the door for the grace of God and reconciliation (Prov. 28:13; Psalm 51:17; Psalm 32:1-5).
Webster's Unabridged Dictionary: baptism: "a ceremony or sacrament of admitting a person into Christianity or a specific church by dipping him in water or sprinkling water on him, as a symbol of washing away sin."

What does the New Testament Teach in regard to baptism?

"Baptidzo" means to dip, plunge, or immerse. There are other words in the New Testament which mean to sprinkle or pour (rhantidzo & ekcheo).

- Matt. 3:16 "went up out of the water"
- John 3:23 John baptized at Aenon, because there was much water there
- Acts 8:38,39 Eunuch went down into water, baptism, came up out of
- Rom. 6:4-7 "buried with him" "raised with him"
- Col. 2:12,13 "buried with him" "raised with him"

We have no authority to substitute one action for another in fulfilling God’s commandments. Christian baptism is by immersion. Though one may think he has been "baptized" by sprinkling or pouring, one has not been scripturally baptized.

Are Infants To Be Baptized?

We have no New Testament command or record of any infant being baptized. We have no right to make a law for God. The first infant baptism we know of took place in the latter part of the second century A.D. Tertullian opposed it strenuously. It was not until the fourth century that this practice was accepted—four centuries too late. Acts 8:12 says that "men and women" were being baptized but not infants. Only people who could hear, believe and repent were candidates for baptism. Becoming a Christian requires personal decision (Luke 14:27). No one can believe or repent for another or be saved for another. Further, infants have no sins needing forgiveness (1 John 3:4)

Baptism among the Early Church Fathers

The first mention of sprinkling in extant literature is in the Didache, which is usually dated approximately 150 A.D. It was first known as ‘clinical baptism.’ Beginning with this early uninspired writing, there are occasional mentions of sprinkling in the general literature of church history on down through the centuries. It was not, however, until the Council of Ravenna, held in 1311, under the direction of Pope Clement V, that sprinkling was officially accepted by the Roman Catholic Church instead of immersion. In fact, some church buildings still standing show the evidence of the previous practice of immersion. Such is the case of the large baptistery building which stands near the leaning tower of Pisa in Italy. The building contains a large full-size baptistery in which possibly as many as 50 people could be immersed at one time. Obviously, it was built before 1311 and the change in doctrine.

1. The Bible nowhere speaks of sprinkling as baptism. Rather the word baptizo is used which literally means ‘to dip, plunge, or immerse.’ The Catholic Encyclopedia says: ‘The most ancient form usually employed was unquestionably immersion. This is not only evident from the writings of the Fathers and the early rituals of both the Latin and Oriental churches, but it can also be gathered from the Epistles of St. Paul, who speaks of baptism as a bath (Eph. 5:26; Rom. 6:4; Titus 3:5). In the Latin Church, immersion seems to have prevailed until the 12th century. After that time it is found in some even as late as the 16th century. Infusion and aspersion, however, were growing common in the 13th century and gradually prevailed in the Western church. The Oriental churches have retained immersion, though not always in the sense of plunging the candidate’s entire body below the water.’

2. Everett Ferguson: ‘A period of instruction, especially pertaining to the moral implications for the Christian life, preceded the baptism . . . . Baptism was administered to those who believed Christian teaching and repented of their sins’ (p. 37)⁶

‘As the confession implies, faith was the necessary prerequisite to baptism. Baptism was administered to those who are persuaded and believe.’ Didache III.6 ‘Baptism was also viewed as an act of repentance’ Didache III.3 (p. 37)

**Substitutes for Baptism**

‘The precedent of Jewish washings, the secular usage of baptizein, circumstantial accounts of baptism in early Christian literature, and the symbolism of baptism as burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:12) indicate that the normal practice in early Christian baptism was a dipping or plunging.’⁷

‘The Didache is the only indication before the middle of the third century of the use of anything but immersion, even in the case of emergency.’

‘The clinical baptism of Novation (Cyprian IV.9, 10) provided an interesting case. We know the circumstance from his opponent, Cornelius, who was elected bishop of Rome in A.D. 251 . . . . The opposition to the validity of Novation’s ordination rested as much on the fact of his receiving sickbed baptism as on the way it was administered, but doubts about the latter were part of the misgivings about the former. There was a feeling that those who received baptism in these circumstances were not fully converted and submitted to baptism only as a safety protection in view of impending death.’ (pp. 51, 52)

**Infant Baptism**

‘The early Christian feeling about the innocence of infants finds clear expression in second century authors and in the writer who makes the first explicit reference to infant baptism in Christian history, Tertullian (On Baptism 18:1-10,12). Innocence here meant ‘sinlessness, or at least guiltlessness.’ (58)

‘This feeling plus the stress on baptism for the remission of sins explains why there is no early reference to infant baptism. It was actually the growth of the practice of infant baptism which led to a changed view of the spiritual condition of the infant.’ (p. 59)

‘The earliest likely reference to infant baptism is to be found in Irenaeus’ (Against Heresies II.xxii.4). (p. 59) ‘The first unambiguous reference is to be found in Tertullian (V. 12), and he was opposed to the practice . . . . He seems to be stating, as elsewhere in his treatise On Baptism, the common position of the church.’ (p. 60)

‘Origen affords evidence that the practice preceded the theological justification (Homilies on Luke V.14, 15). The sequence was infant baptisms then the doctrine of infant sinfulness, and not a doctrine of original sin leading to the practice of infant baptism. The reasons for baptizing a child were being discussed. The child did not have sins of his own. Origen’s answer was that a stain attaches to birth. This is not yet a doctrine of original sin (that is, the inheritance of the guilt of Adam’s transgression).’ (Pp. 60, 61)

‘The first ecclesiastical command to baptize infants is contained in the fourth-century Apostolic Constitutions VI.15.’ (p. 64)

**Other quotations:**

1. ‘It seems clear that up until about the end of the fifth century, adult believer’s baptism was the normal practice of the church. This fact is demonstrated by the emphasis in the Early Fathers on careful preparation for baptism, and the necessity to live a sinless life after baptism.’⁸

‘The practice of infant baptism completes the early patristic developments. Infant baptism was practiced in the second century, but only with the aid of an adult sponsor. A full defense of this custom came to expression in the theology of Augustine in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Only in the fifth

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century did the Syrian Church make infant baptism obligatory; prior to this time it was the exception rather than the rule.\(^9\)

2. William Barclay: 'Commonly baptism was by total immersion and that practice lent itself to a symbolism to which sprinkling does not so readily lend itself. When a man descended into the water and the water closed over his head, it was like being buried. When he emerged from the water, it was like rising from the grave. Baptism was symbolically like dying and rising again. The man died to one kind of life and rose to another; he died to the old life of sin and rose to the new life of grace.'\(^10\)

Does baptidzo really mean 'to immerse'?

After an exhaustive survey of more than 200 examples in Greek literature and ancient translations, Thomas J. Conant concluded: 'The word baptizein, during the whole existence of the Greek as a spoken language, had a perfectly defined and unvarying import. In its literal use it meant, as has been shown, to put entirely into or under a liquid, or other penetrable substance, generally water, so that the object was wholly covered by the inclosing element.'\(^11\)

G. R. Beasley-Murray in his treatise on baptism states: 'Despite the frequent denials of exegetes, it is surely reasonable to believe that the reason for Paul's stating that the baptized is buried as dead, rather than he died (as in v. 6), is the nature of baptism as immersion. The symbolism of immersion representing burial is striking, and if baptism is at all to be compared with prophetic symbolism, the parallelism of act and event symbolized is not unimportant.'\(^12\)

Alexander Campbell said, 'Greek lexicographers, with one consent, in their definitions, as well as Greek philosophers, historians, orators, and poets, in their use of this term baptizo, render it dip, plunge, immerse: never as indicating sprinkling, pouring, or scattering any thing.'\(^13\)

Gingrich & Danker's Revised Lexicon: 'dip, immerse, mid. dip oneself, wash.'\(^14\) In New Testament times, the word was employed in describing the dipping of a garment in dye.

'Sprinkling, as a form of baptism took the place of immersion after a few centuries in the early Church, not from any established rule, but by common consent, and it has since been very generally practiced in all but the Greek and Baptist churches, which insist upon immersion.'\(^15\)

'In essence the action is an extremely simple one, though pregnant with meaning. It consists in a going in or under the baptismal water in the name of Christ (Acts 19:5) or more commonly the Trinity (Matt. 28:19). Immersion was fairly certainly the original practice and continued in general use up to the Middle Ages.'\(^16\)

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9 Ibid.
## Timeline on the History of Baptism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150 A.D.</td>
<td>First mention of ‘sprinkling’ or clinical baptism in Didache.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 182/188</td>
<td>Irenaeus in “Against Heresies” may be the first to specifically mention infant baptism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A.D.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 200 A.D.</td>
<td>Tertullian the first to specifically mention ‘infant baptism.’ He opposes it as a relatively new practice.</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 215</td>
<td>Hippolytus in the “Apostolic Tradition” states “First Baptize the children”</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 254-256</td>
<td>Cyprian of Carthage argues that baptisms given by schismatics are invalid; Bishop Stephen of Rome holds that the sacraments belong not to the minister but to Christ</td>
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<tr>
<td>303–306</td>
<td>Diocletian’s persecution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>311 &amp; 315</td>
<td>First Majorinus, and then Donatus set up as rival bishops of Carthage, after a bishop is ordained by a possible apostate. ‘Donatists’ believed a) only Donatist baptisms are valid and b) baptisms performed by the unworthy are invalid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 312</td>
<td>Conversion of Constantine to Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>Constantine is baptized shortly before his death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 380</td>
<td>British monk Pelagius is shocked by lax morals among Christians in Rome - He eventually rejects the doctrines of Grace and Original Sin, but still believes that infants should be baptized (John 3:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>412 – 421</td>
<td>Augustine denounces the views of Pelagius – Augustine believes that we are all tainted by original sin; unbaptized children are condemned to ‘darkness’</td>
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<tr>
<td>418</td>
<td>Council of Carthage condemns “whoever says that newborn infants should not be baptized”</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th Century</td>
<td>Justinian I made infant baptism compulsory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1311</td>
<td>Council of Ravenna officially accepted sprinkling as a valid substitute for immersion</td>
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<tr>
<td>1412</td>
<td>Council of Florence states infants should receive baptism “as soon as is convenient”</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Students of Ulrich Zwingli illegally rebaptize (immerse) themselves in Zurich, starting the Anabaptist movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>1525</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1536</td>
<td>John Calvin publishes “Christian Institutes,” denying necessity of baptism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1528</td>
<td>Luther states in his Large Catechism “we must be baptized or we cannot be saved”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1609</td>
<td>Englishman John Smyth re-baptizes 40 followers in Amsterdam, starting the Baptist movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1649</td>
<td>Westminster Confession affirms infant baptism, but views that baptism is not necessary for salvation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Alexander Campbell is baptized by Baptist preacher Luce.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1823</td>
<td>Campbell realizes and teaches baptism is ‘for the remission of sins.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>1837</td>
<td>Campbell’s controversy in the Lunenburg letter over the pious unimmersed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Debate on the Validity of baptism as to its purpose (McGary-Burnett)</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 1900</td>
<td>Birth of Pentecostalism, with emphasis on “baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913–1929</td>
<td>Controversy among Christian churches and Disciples over ‘open fellowship’</td>
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</table>
1980 Pope John Paul II reaffirms the necessity for infant baptism, in the “Instruction On Infant Baptism” by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

The Purpose of Baptism

Is Baptism Necessary to Salvation?

1. John 3:3-7
"I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" Cannot means that "it is impossible for him" to enter. "Must" means "it is morally necessary" for one to be born of water and the Spirit. Virtually all scholars of any merit are agreed that the birth of water and Spirit is a reference to baptism. Tit. 3:3-5 speaks of our salvation as a "washing of regeneration"

2. Acts 2:37-41
Baptism's purpose is "for the forgiveness of your sins" (NASV), "so that your sins may be forgiven" (NIV), or "so that your sins will be forgiven" (New Evangelical Translation). All 3000 people who were baptized understood what they needed to do and gladly did it. The baptized were added at baptism (2:41), and the "saved" were added (2:47) to the church. Here the baptized and the saved are regarded as identical. The people were not told to pray at a mourner's bench. They were not told to pray the sinners' prayer. They were baptized that very day.

Ananias came to Paul and told him the things that he must do. In spite of the fact Paul had spent three days fasting (9:9) and praying (9:11), Ananias commanded baptism. Paul was not yet saved, though he was penitent and praying. Ananias told him, "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." Ananias would not have commanded Paul to be baptized and wash away his sins if he were already saved. One does not take medicine because he is well but because he is ill.

4. Romans 6:3-7
Baptism is the act of faith, which unites the penitent believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. One is baptized into Christ. He is baptized into his death and dies with Christ. His old man of sin is crucified with Him. He is also united with Him by baptism in His resurrection. Jesus did not have new life until he arose from the dead. In the same way, new life is not granted until one rises from the watery grave of baptism. The symbolism of baptism marks the time when one by the grace of God is united with Christ. Until one is baptized, he cannot claim to be united with Christ. It is in Christ's death that he shed his blood (John 19:34). To be baptized into his death is to come in contact with the blood, which cleanses from sin (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). The old self of sin was crucified with him "so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless" (inoperative, inactive). It is the person who had died (with Christ) who is freed from sin. Unbaptized people are still in their sins. See Col. 2:12,13

5. Titus 3:3-7
"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." God is the one who does the saving. He does it through (by means of) the washing of rebirth and renewal caused by the Holy Spirit. This washing of rebirth or regeneration is baptism (John 3:5).
6. 1 Pet. 3:21 (NASV)
"and corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Baptism is the means by which God saves us and grants us a good conscience. Baptism is the means by which we appeal (ask) God for a good conscience and are cleansed. Baptism unites us with Christ in His resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5).

Baptism was a part of every example of conversion in the New Testament. The Eunuch did not rejoice until after his baptism; he was not content to wait and asked to be baptized. The jailer and his household considered baptism so important that they were baptized in the middle of the night. When the Samaritans believed the preaching of Philip about Jesus and His kingdom, they were baptized. The 3000 who obeyed at Pentecost were baptized that very day. If baptism were a non-essential, why is there a constant urgency in the New Testament to submit to it?

7. Acts 2:38
"Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Possessing the Spirit is essential to having Christ in our lives. Roman 8:9 "And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." The Holy Spirit is given to all who obey Him (Acts 5:32). We possess the Spirit, "who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who God's possession--to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13,14). The Spirit is given to us because we are sons (Gal. 4:6); we become sons of God by faith when we put on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:26,27). Baptism is essential.

9. Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27
Baptism is "into" Christ and the act by which we put on Christ. Every promise, every spiritual blessing we have is "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:20). Since baptism puts us in Christ, we could not have been in Him before baptism or without baptism. Baptism is the difference between whether one is in Christ, where all spiritual blessings are, or out of Christ, where there are no promises.
- Redemption  Col. 1:13,14
- Salvation 2 Tim. 2:10
- New Creature 2 Cor. 5:17
- No Condemnation Romans 8:1

10. 1 Cor. 12:13
"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." Baptism is the act by which one enters the body of Christ, the church (Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23). The church does not do the saving but is rather made up of those who are saved. Christ is the "Savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). Christ purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The act of baptism is when an individual is saved and added to the body of Christ. If one is not baptized, he has not been purchased by the blood of Christ nor saved.

The Testimony of Church History

1. G.R. Beasley Murray, a noted Baptist scholar, quotes Adolf Schlatter as saying, "There is no gift or power which the Apostolic documents do not ascribe to baptism. He meant of course, that there is no gift or power available to man in consequence of the redemption of Christ that is not available to him in baptism. Though many will expostulate at the statement, there is little doubt that Schlatter is right."17

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2. Everett Ferguson in *Early Christians Speak* list these church fathers who explicitly taught that baptism was for the remission of sins:18

- Barnabas, *Epistle of Barnabas* 11:1,8,11. (70-79 A.D.)
- b. *The Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate* IV. 3:1; *Similitudes* IX. 16:3-6. (not later than 155 A.D.)
- Justin Martyr, *Apology* I. 61. (175 A.D.)
- Theophilus, *To Autolycus* II. 16. (2nd Century A.D.)
- Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 3 (150 A.D.)
- Tertullian, *On Baptism* 12 (150 A.D.)

3. While the testimony of early church leaders does not prove that a belief is true--only the Bible is our authority--it does show how the early church understood the teaching of the New Testament. The idea that baptism is unnecessary is actually a very late development. Zwingli and Calvin in the 16th century believed baptism was a “work of merit” and was unnecessary to salvation, since one cannot earn salvation. It is clear however that the grace of God works through the washing of regeneration, which is baptism (Tit. 3:3-7).

**Acts 2:38 and the Forgiveness of Sins**

Most of the common versions of the New Testament translate Acts 2:38 as does the King James Version, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” One will find a similar rendering in the RSV, NASB, NIV and the NKJV; but this translation leaves some questions still to be asked. The phrase “for the remission of sins” is especially disputed, since some religious groups hold that baptism follows salvation rather than precedes it. This controversy surrounds the word *sic* or “for,” a Greek preposition used hundreds of times in the Greek New Testament. In such cases, they would translate the word “for” to mean “because of,” arguing that one should be baptized because he has already received the remission of his sins. Though some evangelical scholars, such as H. E. Dana, J. R. Mantey and A. T. Robertson, suggest that εἰσὶ means “because of,” and though they have many in agreement, the evidence does not sustain that point of view. There is broad and irrefutable evidence from the language and from history that “for” points not to the cause but to the purpose of repentance and baptism. Peter was telling the Jews to repent and be baptized in order to receive the remission of their sins and the Holy Spirit.

There are three lines of evidence to support this conclusion: first, the context makes sense only if baptism precedes their salvation; second, modern lexicons and versions strongly support baptism as preceding forgiveness; and third, the early church’s testimony overwhelmingly confirms that baptism precedes forgiveness.

**The Evidence from Context**

**Argues that Baptism Precedes Forgiveness**

When the day of Pentecost had come, the apostles baptized in the Holy Spirit took their stand in the temple with the first gospel sermon. They preached Jesus, crucified and resurrected. Peter did not hesitate to let that multitude know that day that they themselves were in part responsible

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for the terrible death of the One that God had named both Lord and Christ. He said, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified” (Acts 2:36). Such a statement must have shook the people of that day to their very core. Luke says that they were “pierced to the heart.” They had awakened to the awful reality of the seriousness of their sin. They had killed the Son of God; their hands were stained with blood. They knew that they had sinned against their God in the most grievous way. Luke continues, “Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Brethren, what shall we do?’” (37) It is guilty men who ask this kind of question not innocent men, desperate men who know in their hearts that they are carrying a burden with eternal consequences. Do you not think that these Jews would have done anything to have this stain removed. Their greatest desire is to be forgiven for this sin and to be reconciled to the God that they love. They asked, “what shall we do,” because they know that this guiltiness must be removed.

God in His grace has a plan for them. He wants them to be saved, to be restored to His love and care. Though they had committed so great a crime, yet the love of God was greater. With many words Peter was exhorting them, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” They wanted to know what to do! He told them, “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” When Peter told them to repent and be baptized, lie was telling them what to do in order to obtain the forgiveness they longed for He was answering their question. It is absurd to think that he would tell them to be baptized because they had already had their sins forgiven. Such an answer doesn’t make sense; it does not fit the question.

Such an answer, however, does fit the belief that faith alone saves. Some have regarded baptism as a work; and since one cannot be saved by works (Eph. 2:8,9), baptism cannot have anything to do with our salvation. They have accused those who believe that baptism precedes salvation with the charge that they believe in a works salvation. It is from this stance that they must deal with in Acts 2:38. They cannot sustain a “faith alone” theology and believe that baptism leads to salvation. They must find an optional view of , so that they can harmonize their belief with the text. As a result, they must read into the text a view that no one held for more than 1500 years. The evidence from ancient times, as we will show, supports the view that baptism is the time when one receives the cleansing from his sins.

Baptism is indeed a work, but we must understand that baptism is not primarily man’s work but God’s! Col. 2:12,13 says,” having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions.” The exhortation to “be baptized” is a passive imperative, a command to have something done to you. Baptism is an ordinance we submit to; but it is God Himself who is working on us, saving us, cleansing us, redeeming us, and justifying us. While the commands to believe, to repent, and to confess are active, the command to he baptized is passive. You do the believing, repenting and confessing; but you submit to someone else who dips you in water and submit to God who saves you in the blood of Christ. God is the active party in baptism; and you, the passive party, receive in baptism the forgiveness of your sins. God is the active party in baptism because only God can forgive.
That we are saved by faith is indisputable (Rom. 5:1), but affirming that we are saved by faith alone is untenable. The Scriptures teach that we are likewise saved by grace (Eph. 2:8), saved by the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5), saved by baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), saved by the gospel (Rom. 1:16), saved by obedience (Heb. 5:8,9), saved by confession (Rom. 10:9,10), and saved by repentance (Luke 24:47). If one is saved by faith alone, why mention these other things? Are we to dismiss them too? Of course not! Our salvation is somewhat like life. We are alive because we breathe, eat, drink fluids, and have shelter. Cut any one of these things off indefinitely and we would die. We need air to live, but without water we would surely die. We need shelter from extreme heat and cold, but without food we will perish. Faith is essential to our salvation; hut repentance, love, confession, and baptism are also essential. To suggest that we are saved by faith apart from these other things is to ignore plain Bible teaching.

We must further argue that other passages of Scripture plainly teach that baptism is the time of our salvation. Ananias, sent from God to Saul of Tarsus, plainly said, “And now why do you delay? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name” (Acts 22:16). Peter himself understood this when he writes, “And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 3:21). The apostle Paul noted that we die to sin when we are baptized into the death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:2,3). He further acknowledges that we are buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him to walk in newness of life. Just as Jesus did not have new life until He was resurrected, we do not have new life until we are resurrected in baptism with Him. It is at that time that our body of sin is done away with (Rom. 6:4-7). Since we have died with Him, we are free from sin The Bible is not a book to contradict itself It is a mishandling of the Scriptures to make Acts 2:38 contradict these other passages. God desires that we give diligence to be workmen who do not have to be ashamed, handling accurately the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15). Pitting one passage against another brings about confusion and division; it always leads to error.

The Evidence from Versions and Lexicons

Argue that Baptism Precedes Forgiveness

If indeed εἰς should be translated “because of” one would expect to find versions of the New Testament and Greek lexicons which support that translation. When one goes to the library to research what the versions actually do say, one finds that the versions and the lexicons do not support that position at all It is remarkable, in fact, that the only people who defend that view are people influenced by Calvinist theology; and that defense is neither wholehearted nor unanimous. In the following list of versions are some that, for honesty’s sake, have gone against the prevalent beliefs of their tradition. They have done this simply because they are committed to an accurate translation. We salute them for their integrity. Here is a list of versions and lexicons which support the historic understanding that “for is purpose (in order to, so that) rather than causal (“because of”).

Versions that Support Forgiveness of Sins at Baptism

Williams
“You must repent--and as an expression of it, every one of you be baptized... that you may have your sins forgiven”

*Young’s Literal Translation*

“You must repent--and as an expression of it, every one of you be baptized... that you may have your sins forgiven”

*J. B. Phillips Translation, 1958*

Peter said unto them, “Reform, and be baptized each of you on the name of Jesus Christ, to remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

*Today’s English Version, 1966*

Peter said to them: “Turn away from your sins, each one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God’s gift, the Holy Spirit.”

*Amplified New Testament, 1958*

And Peter answered them, “Repent--change your views, and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it--and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall received the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

*Goodspeed*

“You must repent, and every one of you be baptized... in order to have your sins forgiven.”

*New Evangelical Translation, 1990; God’s Word to The Nations, 1995*

Peter answered them, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”

*Contemporary English Version, 1995*

Peter said, “Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit.”

*Easy—To—Read Version, 1990*

Peter said to them, “Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

*McCord’s The Everlasting Gospel. 4th ed., 2000*

Peter said to them, “Change your beans, and let each one of you he immersed in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins might be forgiven, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”


Peter replied: “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (1984 edition: “for the forgiveness of your sins”)

Phil Sanders

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Peter said to them, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

“The Jerusalem Bible, 1968
“You must repent,” Peter answered, “and every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Peter said, “Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

New Revised Standard Version, 1989
Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

International English Bible, 2001
Then Peter answered, "Change your hearts and each one of you must be immersed by the authority of Jesus the Messiah, so that your sins may be forgiven. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

So far as this author knows, there is no major, credible version that has ever translated Acts 2:38 with the words “because of.” Unfortunately, one version (International Standard Version, 1999) translates as "since" your sins are forgiven. Not only does this version go against the sense of almost all versions, it also makes no sense. Why would Peter in answer to the sincere question of the people at Pentecost (“What should we do?”) tell them their sins are already forgiven? This version makes little sense, for a few verses later Peter says, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation!” Why did they need to do this, “since your sins are forgiven”? Why did “forgiven” people need still to save themselves?

Lexicons and Greek Works:

Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 1889: “εἰς ἀφέσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, Acts ii.38.” (p. 94)

“to denote purpose in order to, to… εἰς ἀφέσιν ἁμαρτιῶν for forgiveness of sins, so that sins might be forgiven Matt. 26:28; cf. Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; Acts 2:38.”

A. Oepke, “εἰς” in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament II: 429; cf. I:539. Oepke lists εἰς in Acts 2:38 under the heading “Consecutive and final εἰς.” He stated, “The preposition denotes the direction of an action to a specific end.” This means that the act of the repentance and baptism is directed toward the specific goal of the forgiveness of sins. He specifically cites: “John baptizes, and Jesus sheds His blood for the forgiveness of sins (Mk. 1:4;
Lk. 3:3; Matt. 26:28; cf Ac. 2:38)" The pairing together of these passages shows that the reason why Jesus shed His blood is the same reason that one is to be baptized, i.e., "so that sins might be forgiven."


Newman and Nida write that the phrase “so that your sins will be forgiven (literally ‘into a forgiveness of your sins’)...modifies both main verbs: turn away from your sins and be baptized.” (New York: United Bible Societies, 1972, p. 60.)

The Expositor’s Greek Testament (R. J. Knowling)

“εἰς, RV, signifying the aim (that is, the aim of the command is the forgiveness of sins, pds.)

‘It has been objected that St. Peter lays no stress upon the death of Christ in this connection, but rather upon His resurrection. But we cannot doubt that St. Peter who had emphasized the fact of the crucifixion would have remembered his Master’s solemn declaration a few hours before His death, Matt. 26:28. Even if the words in this Gospel εἰς δέοντας διακονίαν εἰς ἐλεημοσύνην are rejected, the fact remains that St. Peter would have connected the thought of the forgiveness of sins, a prerogative which, as every Jew was eager to maintain, belonged to God and to God alone, with the (new) covenant which Christ had ratified by His death. Harnack admits that however difficult it may be to explain precisely the words of Jesus to the disciples at the Last Supper yet one thing is certain, that He connected the forgiveness of sins with His death…. As each individual ἐκαστός was to be baptised (sic), so each, if truly penitent, would receive the forgiveness of sins.” (Vol. 2, p. 91.)

C. F. D. Moule, An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek

Moule clearly regards εἰς in Acts 2:38 as “final or consecutive,” meaning “in the senses with a view to, or resulting in. The grammatical idea is that repentance and baptism result in the forgiveness of sins. (p. 70.)

Although neither a lexicon nor a version, G. R. Beasley-Murray’s Baptism in the New Testament is a classic presentation of the apostolic teaching on baptism. In this scholarly work, he says:

“Whatever the relationship between baptism and the gift of the Spirit elsewhere in Acts, there appears to be no doubt as to the intention of Acts 2:38: the penitent believer baptized in the name of Jesus Christ may expect to receive at once the Holy Spirit, even as he is assured of the immediate forgiveness of his sins.” (p. 108)

“The extent and nature of the grace which the New Testament writers declare to be present in baptism is astonishing for any who come to the study freshly with an open mind. Adolf Schlatter, who was no traditionalist sacramentarian, stated. ‘There is no gift or power which the Apostolic documents do not ascribe to baptism) He meant, of course, there is no gift or power available to man in consequence of the redemption of Christ that is not available to him in baptism. Though many will expostulate at the statement, there is little doubt that Schlatter is right. On the basis of the exposition offered above, and without any attempt to give exhaustive references, the ‘grace’ available to man in baptism is said by the New Testament writers to include the following elements:
forgiveness of sin., Acts 2:38 and cleansing from sins Acts 22:16.1 Cor. 6:11; union with Christ. Gal. 3:27, and particularly union with Him in his death and resurrection, Rom. 6:3ff.; Col. 2:11ff., with all that implies of release from sin’s power, as well as guilt.
and the sharing of the risen life of the Redeemer. Rom. 6:1—11; participation in Christ’s sonship. Gal. 3:26f;
consecration to God. 1 Cor. 6:11, hence membership in the Church, the Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12: 13. Gal. 3:27-29:
possessing the spirit. Acts 2:38, I Cor. 6:11, 12:13, and therefore the new life in the Spirit. i.e.. regeneration. Tit. 3 5, In 3
A grace to live according to the will of God, Rom. 6:1ff., Col. 3:1ff.
deliverance from the evil powers that rule this world. Col. 1:13;
the inheritance of the Kingdom of God. Jn. 3:5, and the pledge of the resurrection of the body, Eph. 1:13f., 4:30.” (pp. 263,264)

**The Evidence from Early Church History**

If baptism was for the forgiveness of sins, i.e., to wash away sins, the early church would have known that fact. It is inconceivable that the early church would not know when their sins were first forgiven. If baptism preceded salvation, we would surely know this from the writings of the early church. On the other hand, if salvation came before baptism, early authors would have been clear about that too.

Everett Ferguson, the most highly regarded Patristics scholar in America, said in *Early Christians Speak* this about baptism:

> “Quite impressive is the way all second-century authors speak of the meaning and benefits of baptism. Among the blessings ascribed to baptism in these writers are the following: remission of sins, salvation. illumination, eternal life, regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit The unanimity and vigor of the early second-century statements about baptism are presumptive of a direct relationship between baptism and forgiveness of sins from the early days of the church. The consistency with which second-century authors make the statements, which they do would have been impossible if this had not been the common Christian understanding earlier. It is inconceivable that the whole Christian world reversed its understanding of the meaning of its central rite of conversion within fifty years of the lifetime of the apostles.” (p. 38)

Evidence suggesting that salvation is at the time of faith and without baptism is just not encountered in the writings of man who lived close to the time of the apostles. While a second century argument is not decisive in and of itself it does confirm what has already been shown to be the teaching of the first century, i.e., baptism is when God forgives our sins. The following quotes present some of the early Christian writers’ own words:

**The Epistle of Barnabas**

Let us inquire if the Lord was careful to make a revelation in advance concerning the water and the cross. Concerning the water it was written with regard to Israel how they will not receive
the baptism which brings forgiveness of sins but will supply another for themselves...Blessed are those who place their hope in his cross and descended into the water. . We descend into the water full of sins and uncleanness, and we ascend bearing reverence in our hearts and having hope in Jesus in our spirit.” (11:1,8,11)

Shepherd of Hermas
“The Shepherd” doesn’t directly quote Acts 2:38 but he does allude to it.
“And I said, ‘I heard, sir, some teachers maintain that there is no other repentance than that which takes place, when we descended into the water and received remission of our former sin.’ He said to me, ‘That was sound doctrine which you heard; for that is really the case’” (Mandate 4:3:1, 2)

Justin Martyr
‘Then they are led by us to where there is water, and in the manner of the regeneration by which we ourselves were regenerated they are regenerated. For at that time they obtain for themselves the washing in water in the name of God the Master of all and Father, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ also said, ‘Unless you are regenerated, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.’. . Since we have been born without our knowledge or choice at our first birth from the moist seed at the union of our parents and have existed I bad and evil conduct, in order that we might not remain children of ignorance and necessity but become children of choice and knowledge and might obtain in the water the forgiveness of past sins, there is called upon the one who chooses to be regenerated and who repents of his sins the name of God the Master of all and Father.... This washing is called illumination since they who learn these things are illuminated in their understanding.” (Apology 1:61)

Theophilus (115 to 181 or 188 AD)
“Moreover, the things which come from the waters were blessed by God, in order that this might be a sign that men were going to receive repentance and forgiveness of sins through the water and the ‘washing of regeneration,’ namely all those who come to the truth and are born again, and receive blessing from God.” (To Autolycus 2:15)

Clement of Alexandria (150 to 220 A.D.)
After his conversion from paganism, he became an elder and is credited with founding a school in Alexandria to teach Christians the Scriptures. He wrote “The Instructor” to teach new converts how to develop the proper character and live a Christian life. In this work, he alluded to both Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16:
“Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are made immortal... This work is variously called grace, and illumination, and perfection, and washing. Washing, by which we cleanse away our sins; grace, by which the penalties accruing to transgressions are remitted; and illumination, by which that holy light of salvation is beheld, that is, by which we see God clearly…Instruction leads to faith, and faith together with baptism is trained by the Holy Spirit.... We who have repented of our sins, renounced our faults, and are purified by baptism run back to the eternal light, children to their father.” (Instructor 1:6:25:3-26:2; 30:2; 32:1)

Cyprian
“Certainly, since I found in the letter the copy of which you transmitted to me, that it was written, ‘That it should not be asked who baptized, since he who is baptized might receive remission of sins according to what he believed,’ I thought that this topic was not to be passed by, especially since I observed in the same epistle that mention was also made of Marcion, saying that ‘even those that came from him did not need to be baptized, because they seemed to have been already baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.’ Therefore we ought to consider their faith who believe without, whether in respect of the same faith they can obtain any grace. For if we and heretics have one faith, we may also have one grace.” (Epistles 72:4)

“For he who has been sanctified, his sins being put away in baptism, and has been spiritually reformed into a new man, has become fitted for receiving the Holy Spirit; since the apostle says, ‘As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.’” (Epistles 73:5)

Tertullian

“Happy is our sacrament of water, in that, by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life! …The consequence is, that a viper of the Cainite heresy, lately conversant in this quarter, has carried away a great number with her most venomous doctrine, making it her first aim to destroy baptism. Which is quite in accordance with nature; for vipers and asps and basilisks themselves generally do affect and live in water less places. But we, little fishes, after the example of our ΙΞΘΥΣ Jesus Christ, are born in water, nor have we safety in any other way than by permanently abiding in water; so that most monstrous creature, who had no right to teach even sound doctrine, knew full well how to kill the little fishes, by taking them away from the water!” (On Baptism 1)

“It has assuredly been ordained that no one can attain knowledge of salvation without baptism. This comes especially from the pronouncement of the Lord, who says, ‘Except one be born of water he does not have life.’” (On Baptism 12)

*While these quotations are brief and only a sample of the writings of the early church, we hope that they are sufficient to demonstrate that the early church believed that baptism is the time that one’s sins are washed away.*

**Conclusion**

Based on the three lines of evidence, we believe that the argument that one is baptized so that his sins may be forgiven is the correct Biblical understanding. If this be true, then Christians ought to be wary of those who are teaching otherwise or are disturbing congregations by creating doubt. Raymond Kelcy said that there was one doctrine about which he had no questions, i.e., “that baptism is for (in order to obtain) the remission of sins.” May we also, having investigated the evidence, also place our trust in that truth from God.

The best thing anyone can do who wants to know the truth is to study the teachings of the New Testament itself. We encourage you to look beyond this attempt to understand one passage to a richer study of the New Testament teaching on baptism. We encourage a deep and exhaustive study of Mark 16:15,16; John 3:1-7; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3-7; Col. 2:12,13; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3 5-7; 1 Pet 3:21. Each of these passages can help one gain a better knowledge of the will of God on the matter.
## What Happens at Baptism?

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### What Will Happen to Good But Unbaptized People?\(^{19}\)

A person of unquestioned sincerity, convinced she should be baptized, hesitated because she knew of many fine people who were not baptized. “What will happen to good unbaptized people?” she asked. Certainly it is easy to understand her reasoning.

That there are excellent moral people, fair to all men, merciful to the unfortunate, who have not been baptized into the Lord is a well-known fact. But if a good man touches a highly charged electric wire, God’s law about electricity is not changed. That good people have not been immersed does not change God’s law about immersion (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12). That many millions of people have been baptized (?) as infants does not change God’s law that baptism is for believers (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:36). That millions of people have been baptized into various sects and denominations does not change God’s law that baptism is into one body, one church (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18). That many sincere Jews and upright Mohammedans have not confessed Jesus does not change God’s law about the deity of His Son (John 3:18; Mark 16:6; Acts 4:12). That some are moral and yet deny the existence of God does not change God’s law about faith in him (Heb. 11:6).

But the laws of God also reveal that some people are better off in God’s sight unbaptized than some who have been immersed (2 Pet. 2:20-22). God’s laws also reveal that some heathen people, not being as stubborn as some who have heard the message of Jesus are going to have it easier in the day of judgment (Matt. 11:20-24). God’s word also reveals that some without a Bible have lived better before God than some knowing the Bible (Rom. 2:14-24).

Certainly one should conclude that no matter what mercy some may have in the day of judgment, that mercy will not be extended to one who knows God’s law on baptism and who refuses to obey (James 4:17; 1 John 2:4).

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Baptism: Its Design

Do we fulfill the command of baptism in the Spirit or in Water?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holy Spirit</th>
<th>Water</th>
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<tr>
<td>In no name (Matt. 3:11)</td>
<td>In the name of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acs 19:5)</td>
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<td>Buried and Raised in (Rom. 6:3,4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not into Christ (John 15:1-6; Acts 8:12-16)</td>
<td>Baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not save (Acts 2:1-4)</td>
<td>For salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No longer needed (John 16:13; Heb. 2:3,4)</td>
<td>Needed so long as men need salvation (Mark 16:16; 2 Tim. 2:10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceased by A.D. 64 (Eph. 4:5)</td>
<td>Unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:20)</td>
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If We Had the Baptism of the Holy Spirit Today

If we had the baptism of the Holy Spirit today, we would expect to see the following things: additional inspired books added to the New Testament, living apostles, people raised from the dead, the maimed and all others healed, water turned to wine, people walking on water, tempests stilled, trees cursed, money found in a fish’s mouth, thousands fed from a few loaves and fishes, words placed in prophets’ mouths, languages miraculously spoken, and many other undeniable miracles. No one is performing these signs today.

Are Infants to Be Baptized?

1. There is not one single command or example of infant baptism in the New Testament.
2. Rom. 6:16-18 Infant baptism denies the person the opportunity to freely choose to follow Jesus Christ. Would we regard an adult baptized by force, independent of his will, as truly baptized?
3. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16 fixes instruction and belief as prerequisites to baptism. (See also John 6:44,45) Infants cannot exercise faith in the gospel message.
4. Acts 2:41 the 3000 who were baptized gladly received the preaching of Peter and chose to ‘save’ themselves (2:40). In addition to receiving the word, those who were baptized were commanded to repent (2:38). Infants are not capable of repenting. If baptism is for ‘the remission of sins,’ we must assume infants are lost in sin.
5. Acts 8:12 the Samaritans who believed Philip’s preaching of the kingdom and Jesus Christ were baptized, both men and women (males and females of full age and stature). It is assumed that infants were baptized whenever ‘household’ baptisms occurred. Why were infants not baptized in this instance, if indeed household baptisms included infants? Surely, some Samaritans had infants.
6. Acts 8:36,37 the Eunuch was permitted baptism after the confession of his faith. ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.”
7. Acts 10:44-48 Cornelius and his people heard the word before they were baptized
8. Acts 16:33,34 all the house of the Philippian jailer was baptized, having believed and rejoicing at their obedience.
9. Acts 16:14 Lydia was listening to Paul, and the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s preaching.

10. Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

11. 1 Cor. 1:16 Stephanas’ household was comprised of people old enough to have ‘devoted themselves for ministry to the saints’ (16:15).

12. 1 Pet. 3:21 baptism is an inquiry for a good conscience. Do infants have defiled consciences?

13. Col. 3:5-11; Rom. 6:3-7 Baptism is the putting away of the old man of sin and taking on the new self freed from sin. What old man of sin does an infant have to put away?
God's Second Law of Pardon

When a person has been baptized for the remission of his sins, all his past sins are forgiven. This by itself, however, does not insure that the Christian will not sin after his baptism. What should the Christian do when he has sinned against God? How are the Christian's sins forgiven? There are three things God expects of a Christian who has committed a sin: (1) confession of his sin, (2) repentance, (3) prayer for forgiveness.

Confession of Sin

James 5:16 “Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

1 John 1:8,9 “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Repentance

Acts 8:18-24 “When Simon the Sorcerer saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, ‘Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’

Peter noted that Simon’s money would perish with him and that his heart was not right before God. ‘Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a though in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

Col. 3:5-11 “put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. . .rid yourselves of all such things. . .put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

Prayer

Acts 8:22 ‘Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord’

James 3:16 ‘Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed’

1 John 5:16 ‘If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life.”

Ping-Pong Salvation

A young adult comes into a preacher’s office with great sadness and heart-felt regret over a past sin he has committed:

“I used to worry so much about whether or not I was saved.” I tried to do right as hard as I could, but every time I sinned and messed up I thought I was lost. I’d feel so guilty and weak and worthless. Then I would pray and ask God’s forgiveness, and I knew I was all right again. Then I’d sin again; then I’d pray again. I was so worried that if I didn’t ‘pray up’ just before I died, I’d be lost forever—even though I am a Christian. I don’t’ know whether I am saved or not half the time. I hope so, anyway.”

Is this the kind of faith the Lord desires for us? Has he provided for his people a life filled with doubt and anxiety over salvation? Did Jesus come to earth and sacrifice His body and blood
upon the cross for His people to live with such uncertainty? How does this attitude harmonize with the peace that passes understanding? Is Christianity a livable faith?

 Causes of an understanding like this:

1. Imbalanced teaching on the wrath of God to the exclusion of teaching on God's grace.
2. Unrealistic and impossible standards set up by authority figures, so that an individual never feels confident or assured of God's favor.
3. Guilt over being tempted arising from not distinguishing temptation from sin.
4. Guilt arising from the manipulative use of religion.

 Passages of Confidence and Reassurance

- Matt. 11: 28-30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."
- Matt. 25:21 His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’
- John 3:17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.
- Rom. 8:1-2 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.
- Rom. 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- 1 Tim. 1:15-16 The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.
- 1 Tim. 2:3-4 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- 2 Tim. 1:12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.
- 2 Tim. 4:6-8 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.
- Heb. 4:14-16 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- 2 Pet. 1:10-11 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never
stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

- 1 John 5:13-15 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

The Assurance of Walking in the Light (1 John 1:7-2:2)

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Some Insights from this passage:

1. All people sin; even people close to God will sin from time to time (Rom. 3:23). Remember Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, and Paul. Each of them sinned against God but found forgiveness (1 Tim. 1:12-16).

2. “Walking” (peripateo) is a word referring to one’s way of life or thrust of life. It is how one lives in the general sense. The Christian who continues walking in the light is promised continual cleansing from all sin. Salvation is a continuing process that begins with baptism and continues through life for the person walking in the light.

3. There is a difference between committing a sin in weakness and making sin a way of life (Heb. 10:26). The sinner is one who gives himself to sin, though he may sometimes do good; the Christian is one who gives himself to the Lord, although he may sometimes do something wrong.

4. Walking “in the light” is not the same thing as living a life of perfect sinlessness. Humans cannot live sinless lives; they cannot be perfect as Jesus was. According to verse seven, even when one walks “in the light,” one needs the blood of Jesus to cleanse one’s sins. If one could be perfect, one would not need the blood of Jesus to cleanse one’s sins. Walking in the light implies our sincere effort not to sin; Christ’s blood, under this condition, cleanses us from all sins (there is no exception; his blood cleanses totally), and in this way guiltless children have spiritual association and union with the Father.

5. The blood of Jesus, when applied, cleanses a Christian from all sin or every kind of sin. One is either cleansed from all sin or one is not really cleansed at all. The Lord Jesus does not cleanse us from most of our sins, leaving us stained with some. He cleanses us completely, so that there is no spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Eph. 5:27). This cleansing is not automatic or unconditional. The cleansing is given as one confesses (1 John 1:9) and keeps his commandments (2:3). Confession here may also imply penitence (Acts 8:20-24).
6. The word “cleanse” (katharizo) is in the present tense and denotes continuous action. The blood of Jesus “keeps on cleansing” from all sin. As long as one is walking in the light, one continues to receive cleansing from his sins. It is the blood of Jesus, shed on the cross, which cleansed us completely and brought us into fellowship with God; now the same blood of Jesus keeps us clean from all sin that would mar that fellowship.

7. God is both faithful and just to forgive us. He is faithful in that he will not go back on the promise that He made in the Lord Jesus (Heb. 8:12; Jer. 31:31-34).

8. Jesus is not only our atoning sacrifice (propitiation, hilasmos), He is also our advocate. An advocate (parakletos) was a person “called alongside,” whose purpose was to defend and support. Jesus is defending us before the throne of heaven (Heb. 7:25, Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them).
   - parakletos: a legal advocate, counselor, helper, or comforter. In rabbinical literature the word could indicate one who offers legal aid or who intercedes on behalf of someone else. In 1 John 2:1 the word signifies a legal advocate or a counsel for the defense. Jesus advocates for us in the presence of the Father.
   - hilasmos: “satisfaction, propitiation. Since the idea is to placate the wrath of God, the Lord Jesus through his blood propitiates for our sins. His atoning sacrifice eradicates our sin and appeases the wrath of God. God sent His Son Jesus in love to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10). The Lord Jesus in offering His blood turned aside the wrath of God and made brought His Father to have pleasure in us. God no longer holds our transgressions against us (2 Cor. 5:20).

9. As our Advocate, Jesus Christ is the Righteous One. He is the righteous dying for the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18; Isa. 53:11).

10. The result of walking in the light (1:7), confession (1:9), propitiation (2:2) and advocacy (2:1) is parresia or confidence before the divine judgment (4:17; 2:28), or victory over the consciousness of sin (1 John 5:13-14).

Forgiving Oneself

‘Years ago I committed a terrible sin. I'm so ashamed I can hardly talk about it. I don't know if I'll ever be able to forgive myself. I feel so dirty, as if I'll never be clean. I became a Christian a few years ago, and it seemed to help. But, ever so often, I remember that sin and feel lost all over again. I don't feel fit to be a Christian.’

The Problem:
1. not God’s ability to forgive the penitent believer but in the believer ability to accept his own forgiveness.
2. not in the evidence of pardon in the Word of God but in one's own mind to feel saved.
3. People believe what they tell themselves, even if what they say is not true.

The Dynamic of Sin and the Self
1. Sin is an offense against God and also against one's self (Prov. 8:36; Gal. 6:7,8).
2. The conscience is a God-given means by which one either approves or condemns oneself (Rom. 2:14-15).

3. A pricked conscience, when one has violated what he believes to be wrong, can cause a lot of pain in one's heart and can lead to anger at self and low self-esteem (Psa.38:1-8).

Forgiveness is:
1. forgetting against, i.e., no longer holding against oneself the sins one has committed (2 Cor. 5:20; Heb. 8:11-12; Psalm 103:10-12; Micah 7:18,19; 1 Pet. 4:8; Isa. 43:25).
2. ends guiltiness by blotting out the offenses and settling the matter once and for all by the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:24).
3. a putting to death of the old man of sin (Rom. 6:4-11).
4. a reconciliation with all things new (2 Cor. 5:17).
5. The goal of forgiving oneself is to forget the past sins against oneself, to no longer hold sins against oneself, to reconcile with oneself, so that from this time forward all things are new.

Stumbling blocks to forgiving one's self
1. When penitent change has never taken place
2. When one's life is empty (Matt. 12:43-45)
3. When one confuses weakness with a lack of penitence
4. When one expects oneself to live a life above human capability, so that one is doomed always to fail.

Four Steps to Forgiving Yourself:

1. Be sure that you have genuinely repented

2. Focus your attention on what you have become not what you were!
   a. Paul used his past for illustration purposes, but he does not linger
      Acts 8:1-3 stoning of Stephen
      Acts 26:5,9-12 cast vote to murder, imprison Christians, caused them to blaspheme
      1 Cor. 15:9-10 not fit to be called an apostle, persecutor
      2 Cor. 12:11 a nobody
      Gal. 1:13,14 I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure, zealous
      Phil. 3:6 persecutor of the church
      1 Tim. 1:12-16 chief of sinners, blasphemer, persecutor, violent aggressor
   b. Paul dealt with his past by “forgetting” it (Phil. 3:13,14 (epilanthanomenos: not the focus of his attention, a change in his life direction and focus)
      c. God helped Paul to forget the old man and concentrate on the new man (Col. 3:1-11)
      d. By the grace of God I am what I am (1 Cor. 15:9,10) “I'm not all I'm going to be; I'm not all I ought to be; but, thank God, I'm not what I used to be.'
      e. You cannot change the past, nor is that necessary for you to forgive yourself. What you can do is change yourself and your attitude toward yourself by becoming the person God and you yourself wishes you to be. In doing this realize that no one is perfect but God.

3. Trust God instead of your feelings
   a. Feelings are an accurate reflection of how we perceive things to be but do not always reflect reality (Luke 5:4-9).
b. God can and will do what He has promised (John 8:36; Rom. 4:21).
c. ‘For feelings come and feelings go,
   And feelings are deceiving;
   My warrant is the Word of God,
   Naught else is worth believing.’

4. Draw close to God (James 4:8). You are special (Eph. 2:19; 1 Pet. 2:9)
The Five Points of Calvinism

There are two camps of theology within Christianity in America today: Arminianism and Calvinism. Calvinism is a system of biblical interpretation taught by John Calvin. Calvin lived in France in the 1500’s at the time of Martin Luther who sparked the Reformation.

The system of Calvinism focuses on God’s sovereignty, stating that God is able and willing by virtue of his omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence, to do whatever He desires with His creation. It also maintains that within the Bible are the following teachings: That God, by His sovereign grace predestines people into salvation; that Jesus died only for those predestined; that God regenerates the individual where he is then able and wants to choose God; and that it is impossible for those who are redeemed to lose their salvation.

Arminianism, on the other hand, maintains that God predestined, but not in an absolute sense. Rather, He looked into the future to see who would pick him and then He chose them. Jesus died for all peoples’ sins, all who have ever lived and ever will live, not just the Christians (1 John 2:1-2). Each person is the one who decides if he wants to be saved or not (Acts 2:40). And finally, it is possible to lose your salvation (1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Heb. 10:26ff.).

The teaching of the Scripture is not either Calvinism or Arminianism. The New Testament teaches the freewill of the believer (John 3:16), who is called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14), is saved by the message preached (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:21), when one believes and obeys the gospel (Mark 16:16) by repentance (Acts 2:38; 17:30) and baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-7, 16-18). The Scriptures teach that one can turn his back on God and fall from grace (Gal. 5:4; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Heb. 10:26-31; 1 Cor. 10:12), losing his salvation.

While some things are predestined and God foreknows the future, each person stands before God on the basis of his own choices and behavior (2 Cor. 5:10: Rom. 14:12; Rev. 20:11-15). People are chosen, when in obedience to the calling of the Gospel they demonstrate their faith (Eph. 1:13-14).

Calvinism is known by an acronym: T.U.L.I.P.

Total Depravity (Total Inability and Original Sin)
Unconditional Election
Limited Atonement (Particular Atonement)
Irresistible Grace
Perseverance of the Saints (Once Saved Always Saved)

Total Depravity:
Sin has affected all parts of man. The heart, emotions, will, mind, and body are all affected by sin. We are completely sinful. We are not as sinful as we could be, but we are completely affected by sin.

1. Spiritual consequences of sin cannot be transmitted from father to son but only falls on the one who committed the act: Ezek 18:1-4; 18-20; Jer 32:29-30
2. 1. Exodus 32:3133 In this passage, Moses wanted to receive the punishment for
The doctrine of Total Depravity is derived from scriptures that reveal human character: Man's heart is evil (Mark 7:21-23) and sick (Jer. 17:9). Man is a slave of sin (Rom. 6:20). He does not seek for God (Rom. 3:10-12). He cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14). He is at enmity with God (Eph. 2:15). And, is by nature a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3). The Calvinist asks the question, 'In light of the scriptures that declare man's true nature as being utterly lost and incapable, how is it possible for anyone to choose or desire God?' The answer is, 'He cannot. Therefore God must predestine.'

Calvinism also maintains that because of our s fallen nature we are born again not by our own will but God's will (John 1:12-13); God grants that we believe (Phil. 1:29); faith is the work of God (John 6:28-29); God appoints people to believe (Acts 13:48); and God predestines (Eph. 1:1-11; Rom. 8:29; 9:9-23).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unconditional Election:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God does not base His election on anything He sees in the individual. He chooses the elect according to the kind intention of His will (Eph. 1:4-8; Rom. 9:11) without any consideration of merit within the individual. Nor does God look into the future to see who would pick Him. Also, as some are elected into someone else's sin. In verse 33, the one who sinned is removed from the book, not the one whose parents have sinned.</td>
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<td>3. We will be judged only by our own actions: Mt 12:36-37; Rom 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; 1 Pe 1:17</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Isa 59:1-2, 'Your sins have separated you from your God' not Adams</td>
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<td>5. Gentiles do by nature the good things of the law: Rom 2:14-16</td>
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<td>6. Cornelius was devout, feared God, generous, a praying man Acts 10:1-4, 22 yet unsaved: 11:14</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Man has a freewill and can choose to do good or evil: Josh 24:15 ‘Choose this day...'</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Why would Jesus use infants as a model for all believers to imitate in character if they were ‘utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil'? Mt 18:1-3; 19:13-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Paul also used infants as a model of purity for Christians to follow: 1 Cor 14:20</td>
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<td>10. Paul states that he was once spiritually alive but then he sinned &amp; died/was killed: Rom 7:9-11</td>
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<td>11. God said that the king of Tyre was ‘blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you.' Ezek 28:15</td>
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<td>12. Jer 19:2-6 human sacrifices of children to Baal is called the ‘blood of the innocent’</td>
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If newborns do not know "good or evil" yet the Bible says, 'Your sins have separated you from your God' (Isa 59:1-2) then newborns must be born united with God.
### Limited Atonement:

Jesus died only for the elect. Though Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all, it was not efficacious for all. Jesus only bore the sins of the elect. Support for this position is drawn from such scriptures as Matt. 26:28 where Jesus died for 'many'; John 10:11, 15 which say that Jesus died for the sheep (not the goats, per Matt. 25:32-33); John 17:9 where Jesus in prayer interceded for the ones given Him, not those of the entire world; Acts 20:28 and Eph. 5:25-27 which state that the Church was purchased by Christ, not all people; and Isaiah 53:12 which is a prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion where he would bore the sins of many (not all).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Bible says that Jesus died for all men.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. 1 John 2:1 'My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.'</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Luke 19:10</td>
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<td>3. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15</td>
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<td>4. Hebrews 2:9</td>
</tr>
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### Irresistible Grace:

When God calls his elect into salvation, they cannot resist. God offers to all people the gospel message. This is called the external call. But to the elect, God extends an internal call and it cannot be resisted. This call is by the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts and minds of the elect to bring them to repentance and regeneration whereby they willingly and freely come to God. Some of the verses used in support of this teaching are Romans 9:16 where it says that 'it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy'; Philippians 2:12-13 where God is said to be the one working salvation in the individual; John 6:28-29 where faith is declared to be the work of God; Acts 13:48 where God appoints people to believe; and John 1:12-13 where being born again is not by man’s will, but by God’s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Man loses his freewill and his actions are not the result of his personal choices: Calvinists will actually argue that they do not personally have a free will to choose anything. Man becomes a puppet/robot of either Devil: ‘The Devil made me do it’ God: ‘God forced me into becoming a Christian although I was having fun as a sinner’</th>
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<tr>
<td>Passages that prove man has a free will and God expects man to choose to do right Deut 30:15-18; Josh 24:15; Jn 15:6-7; 3:16</td>
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<td>• Man can ‘resist the Holy Spirit’: Acts 6:10; 7:51-55</td>
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<td>Without free will, many of Bible statements make no sense:</td>
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<td>• ‘Why do you call me Lord &amp; don’t do what I say’ Lk 6:46 Why? God willed it that way!</td>
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<td>• ‘Whosoever believes shall be saved’ Jn 3:16</td>
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<td>• ‘Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Re 22:17</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ‘And whosoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against...</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Perseverance of the Saints:</strong></td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| You cannot lose your salvation. Because the Father has elected, the Son has redeemed, and the Holy Spirit has applied salvation, those thus saved are eternally secure. They are eternally secure in Christ. Some of the verses for this position are John 10:27-28 where Jesus said His sheep will never perish; John 6:47 where salvation is described as everlasting life; Romans 8:1 where it is said we have passed out of judgment; 1 Corinthians 10:13 where God promises to never let us be tempted beyond what we can handle; and Phil. 1:6 where God is the one being faithful to perfect us until the day of Jesus’ return. | 1. Fall from grace - Gal. 5:1-4, 13  
2. Be led away with error - 2 Pet. 3:17  
3. Err from the truth - James 5:19-20  
4. Weak brother may perish - 1 Cor. 8:11  
5. Fall into condemnation - James 5:12  
6. Be moved away from the hope - Col. 1:21-23  
7. Deny the Lord who bought them - 2 Pet. 2:1  
8. Depart from the living God - Heb. 3:12-14  
9. Can be a castaway - 1 Cor. 9:27  
| Mark 4:16 (Luke 8:13) ‘they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy; … then, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away. John 15:5-6 ‘have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame. Hebrews 10:26-27 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.’ |
Are Babies Born in Sin?
Calvinism: Total Hereditary Depravity

The doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity says that every person from birth has a nature that is corrupt, perverse, and sinful throughout. As a result of this inborn corruption, the natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good. This spiritual inability means that the sinner is so spiritually bankrupt that he can do nothing pertaining to his salvation. The natural man is enslaved to sin; he is a child of Satan, rebellious toward God, blind to truth, corrupt, and unable to save himself or prepare himself for salvation.

It further says that man was not created this way, for God made Adam upright. When Adam chose evil in the garden, he thereby plunged himself and the entire race into spiritual ruin and lost for himself and his descendants the ability to make right choices in the spiritual realm. His descendants are still free to choose; but inasmuch as Adam’s offspring are born with sinful natures, they do not have the ability to choose spiritual good over evil. Consequently, man’s will is no longer free; instead, man’s will, as the result of inherited depravity, is in bondage to his sinful nature. As a result of Adam’s sin, men are born in sin and by nature are spiritually dead. Therefore, if they are to become God’s children and enter His kingdom, they must be born anew of the Spirit.

The Bible Says:
1. The spiritual condition of a person at birth:
   Rom. 7:7-12 “I was once alive apart from the Law”
   Rom 9:10,11 “the children..., neither having done anything good or bad”
   Ezek. 28:15 “You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you.”
   Acts 17:29 “being then the offspring of God”
   Heb. 12:9 God is the “Father of our spirits”
   Luke 18:15,16 “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” (How can this be if infants are born wholly corrupt and unable to do good?)

2. How does a man alienate himself from God?
   Rom. 7:9,10 “when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died”
   Cal. 1:21 “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior”
Psalm 58:3 “Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.” (They are not born astray; they go astray)

Isa. 59:1,2 “but your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”

1 John 3:4 “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” (Sin is an act not an inheritable trait.)

Rom. 6:16 “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to some to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?” (One chooses slavery to sin; he is not born enslaved to sin.)

Ezek. 18:1-32 “The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son.” Sin (as an act) and its effects may be learned, but sin and its guilt are not inherited.

3. Man is not totally depraved; man is capable of good but is weak

The idea of weakness to temptation and sin is not the same as total inability to do any good

Matt. 26:41 Jesus said “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body (flesh) is weak.” (That man is willing means that man has some good within him.)

Gen. 2:17 Adam and Eve were not to eat fruit from “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” (This is not the tree of the knowledge of evil and evil. Adam and Eve received knowledge of good as well as evil. They were not totally corrupt in knowledge; even in sin they had knowledge of good.)

Gen. 8:21 “Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.”

Luke 8:15 In the parable of the sower: “But the seed on the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.”

Acts 10:2 Cornelius, though an unregenerate man was nevertheless “devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.”

Rom. 7:21-23 ‘When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.”

Rom. 2:14,15 Gentiles who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law (how can they if they are totally unable to any good?)

4. That man is free to choose between good and evil, God and Satan.

Rom. 6:16-18 “though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.”

Acts 2:40 “Save yourselves from this perverse generation”

1 Pet. 1:22 “you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth”

John 3:16 “that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects (does not obey) the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”
Rev. 22:17 “whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life”

Josh. 24:15 “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve”

1 Kings 18:21 Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

5. Some questions:

- Luke 13:5, “unless you repent, you too will all perish.” Why would Jesus Christ condemn people for failure to repent when they are incapable of repentance or doing any good toward their salvation?

- Heb. 11:6 ‘without faith it is impossible to please God’ Why would God demand faith from all men, when He knows that men are incapable of believing?

- 2 Cor. 5:18-20 “Be reconciled to God.” Why would God ask men to be reconciled if they were not capable of doing anything by which they could be reconciled? (The word “reconcile” implies a separation and a reunion; it means “to bring back into harmony.” A reconciled husband and wife were once in harmony, separated, and later restored. If an infant is born in sin, he cannot be reconciled because he was never in harmony with the Lord. Infants are not born in sin but born pure; they separated from God when they sin and reconciled to God by obedience to the gospel.)

An Objection:

What about Psalm 51:5? “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Doesn’t this imply we are born in sin?

The NIV translates poorly here. Literally, David’s words would be translated: “Behold in iniquity I was born and in sin my mother conceived me.” The idea of this verse is that David was born in an evil and sinful world. Let’s remember that sin is an act, a transgression of God’s law. Sin is not inherited; it is learned. One speaks a certain language because he was born in an environment that speaks that particular language. In Acts 2 the apostles spoke with the miraculous gift of tongues to people from many nations. When they heard the apostles, they marveled and said, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?” (Acts 2:7,8 NASB). One learns a language, and one learns sin by being born into a world that practices it.

To make this passage say that David was born depraved and sinful as a babe would make it contradict what David says in Psalm 22:9-10: “Yet you brought me out of the womb; you make me trust in you even at my mother’s breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.” The fact that the world is a sinful place in which to be born does not mean that one is born sinful and guilty of sin.

### The Nature of Man

God made man with two natures: (1) an inward man, following the law of his mind (Rom. 7:23-24) which delights in the law of God and which of itself by nature can decide in moral matters what is right (Luke12:57; Rom. 2:14; 1 Cor. 11:14); (2) an outward man of flesh (Rom. 7:25) which has no more religion than the beasts and knows nothing but to indulge itself. It is not subject to the law of God (Rom. 8:7) and cannot be, for flesh has no reason. It should not be expected that any moral goodness could dwell in the flesh (Rom. 7:8) or of badness either. Left to itself, by nature, the flesh will seek self-indulgence (Eph. 2:3). But the fleshly part of man is not sinful in itself. It is not immoral, but
amoral: it does not know what morals are. Given the lead, its direction is immorality, but it was not made impregnated with sin. All that God made was very good.

Our parents bring us into a world of sin. (Psa. 51:5.) Our parents bring us into America, a land of the English language and of sin, but we have to learn both the language and sin. (Cf. Acts 2:8.) Psalm 51:5 is vivid poetical language, as is Psalm 58:3. Literally we do not speak as soon as we are born, nor that soon go astray, but the fact is that we are not born astray and as we learn right from wrong we go astray. Then our sins, not Adam's, separate between our God and us. (Isa. 59:1-2.) Our fathers' eating sour grapes will not set our teeth on edge. (Ezek. 18.) We receive the effects of many misdeeds of our fathers (Ex. 20:5), but never the guilt (Deut. 24:16). We were whole and perfect when we were created till sin was found in us. (Ezek. 28:15.) The Lord forms the spirit in each of us, and he does not start us out as sinners. (Zech. 12:1.) He starts us in a way that Jesus thought fits us for heaven. (Matt. 19:14.) Romans 5:12 is not discussing those without the use of their minds, nor those who do not know their right hand from their left, but it is discussing those who have on their own sinned. (Rom. 3:9 f.)

Other passages for consideration:

Matt. 26:41 'Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.'

Eccl. 7:29 'Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.'

Gen. 8:21 And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Ezek. 28:15 'You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you.'

Rom. 7:8-11 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.
Calvinism teaches that God has unconditionally elected some to bring to a knowledge of himself, not on the basis of any merit shown by the object of his grace and not based upon his looking forward to discover who would “accept” the offer of the gospel. God, according to this doctrine, has elected upon the basis of His own will some for glory and some for damnation. He made this sovereign choice before the foundation of the world.

The Calvinist doctrines of unconditional election coupled with irresistible grace means that neither the elect nor the lost can resist God’s will. Neither has freewill to choose to follow God or not. Their fate is sealed from the beginning.

John Calvin said:

By Predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All men are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly, as each has been created for one or the other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”

The Bible teaches:
1. *God desires the salvation of all people* (1 Tim. 2:3,4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
2. *Jesus tasted death for all people, not just the saved* (Rom. 5:6; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 1:12-15).
3. *God loves all* (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8).
4. *Jesus commissioned the apostles to preach to the whole world* (Matt. 28:18; Mark 16:15).
5. *Jesus expects all men to believe and to repent* (Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:16). The Scriptures everywhere assume men are capable of repentance.
7. *Sinners are lost because they refuse to seek God and obey the gospel* (Acts 13:46; Matt. 23:37; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:10-12).
8. *The righteous people are saved because they have met conditions for eternal life* (Matt. 19:17; John 5:40; Heb. 5:8,9; Acts 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; John 3:3-7; Matt. 7:21).
10. *God renders to each man according to his works* (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Psalm 28:4; 2 Tim. 4:14; Rev. 20:11-15; 22:12).

Some Things Are Predestined

“Predestinate” is used six times in four passages of the New Testament. Acts 4:28 says the death of Jesus was predestined by the Father. Rom. 8:28-30 says that God foreordained the

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20 Calvin’s *Institutes*, Book III, chap. 21, sect. 5.
called (the church) to be conformed to the image of His Son and to be justified and glorified. In 1 Cor. 2:7, we find that by God's wisdom the gospel was predestined to come out at the appointed time. In Eph. 1:3-14 Paul says that God chose “us” and foreordained (predetermined, predestined) us to sonship and blessing.

While the church is predestined for heaven and the lost are predestined for hell, each man decides for himself whether he will choose the destiny of the broad or the narrow way. While the roads invariably lead to their destinies, each one chooses the road he travels.

**Predestination and Foreknowledge**

*Acts 2:23*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predestination (prooridzo) “to decide upon beforehand, determine ahead of time, to foreordain the things that will come to pass.” Eph. 1:5; 2 Cor. 9:7</th>
<th>Foreknowledge (proginosko) “to know beforehand, to know in advance.” Acts 26:4; 1 Pet. 1:20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What God predestines, God determines beforehand to happen</td>
<td>What God foresees, God permits to happen. The decision to make it happen comes by the planning and choice of another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaven and hell are predestined places to bless and to curse.</td>
<td>Whether one goes to heaven or hell depends on one’s response to God. Rom. 2:1-10; 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God predetermined or decided beforehand that Jesus would die on the cross Acts 2:23; 4:27-28</td>
<td>Jesus took the initiative and made the decision to do the Father’s will John 10:18; Luke 23:42; Matt. 26:53; Heb. 5:8-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Problem of the Foreknowledge of God**

If God, from all eternity, foreknew every thing that ever has or ever will happen, then God knows just who and how many would be saved and who, if any, would be lost. And since the final destiny of every person must be exactly as God foresaw, then such foreknowledge amounts to an unchangeable decree.

If God knew before time began that Cain would kill his brother, then there was no possibility left to Cain to avoid the deed. If Cain could have done otherwise, would this not have falsified the foreknowledge of God? If God foresees that one would act wickedly and be lost, then there is no possibility for him to act obediently so as to be saved. Since God foreknows every thing, He must have decreed every thing; and as He foreknew the destiny of every man, it follows that He decreed the destiny which man had no power to change.

**Does God Foreknow All Things?**

This is not the same question as “Can God foreknow all things?” Of course, God is able to know all things present and future and to make happen what is according to His will (Psalm 147:5; Isa. 46:8-11). Infinite power, however, does not require God to do every thing but implies
the ability to do whatever is in harmony with His attributes and purposes. There are some things that God, for His own reasons, chooses not to know.

- Gen. 6:5-7 Then 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. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. The LORD said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”

- Gen. 18:20-21 And the LORD said, “The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”

- Gen. 22:10-12 Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham!” And he said, “Here I am.” He said, “Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.” Heb. 11:17 says that God tried or tested Abraham.

- Ex. 32:10-14 So the Lord changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.

- Jer. 7:31 “They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind.” Cf. Jer. 29:5; 32:35 (God did not foreordain these things, since it never entered into His mind they would happen.)

- Jonah 3:9-10 “Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish.” When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

“Although God is omniscient, His is not obliged, in consequences of this, to know all that He can know, no more than He is obliged, because He is omnipotent, to do all that He can do.”

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21 T. W. Brents, “The Foreknowledge of God” in *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, 92-108. Students who would like to study this further are strongly urged to examine this chapter.
Calvinism: Perseverance of the Saints
Are Christians Once Saved, Always Saved?

Calvinism’s “Eternal Security”

"Eternal security," according to Calvinists, is the work of God which guarantees that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost. The concept of eternal security emphasizes God’s activity in guaranteeing the eternal possession of the gift of eternal life. It relates to those the Holy Spirit regenerates, and its veracity does not rest on feelings or experiences.

Preservation is quite similar to eternal security in emphasizing the work of God in preserving the believer in his salvation.

Perseverance, the term generally used in Calvinism, labels the fifth point in Calvin’s theology, the “final perseverance” of the saints. It means that believers can neither totally or finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved" (Westminster Confession, XII. 1). It seems to focus on the believer—it is the believer who perseveres (albeit through the decree and power of God). Security focuses on God—it is God who secures our salvation. It does not deny that there may be times of backsliding, but it stresses the need for demonstrable fruit throughout the Christian life. Sometimes those who approach this doctrine from the viewpoint of perseverance deny the possibility of a Christian’s being carnal.

Though eternal security, preservation, and perseverance in reality all teach the same bottom line conclusion (namely, that the true believer will not lose his salvation), assurance is a different doctrine. It is the realization of the truth of eternal security or perseverance. A secure salvation is a true fact whether one realizes it or not. Thus a believer has security whether or not he has assurance.22

Passages Calvinists use to teach “once saved, always saved.”

Calvinists believe that you cannot lose your salvation. Because the Father has elected, the Son has redeemed, and the Holy Spirit has applied salvation, those thus saved are eternally secure. They are eternally secure in Christ. Some of the verses for this position are John 10:27-28 where Jesus said His sheep will never perish; John 6:47 where salvation is described as everlasting life; Romans 8:1 where it is said we have passed out of judgment; 1 Corinthians 10:13 where God promises to never let us be tempted beyond what we can handle; and Phil. 1:6 where God is the one being faithful to perfect us until the day of Jesus’ return.

- John 5:24: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.’
- John 6:37-40: ‘All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of

22 Charles C. Ryrie, Basic Theology (Victor Books).
my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.'

• John 10:28-29: ‘I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 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.’

• Romans 5:9-10: ‘Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.’

• Romans 8:1: ‘There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.’ (Verse not complete)

• Romans 8:31-39: ‘What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died--more than that, who was raised--who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.’

• Romans 11:29: ‘For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.’

• 1 Corinthians 1:4-9: ‘I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge--even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you--so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.’

• Ephesians 4:30: ‘And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.’

• Philippians 1:6: ‘And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.’

• Hebrews 7:25: ‘Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.’

• Hebrews 13:5: ‘Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’

• 1 Peter 1:5: ‘[The elect] by God’s power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.’

• Jude 1:24: ‘Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy,’

Also, arguing a fortiori, traditional Calvinists support their doctrine with Romans 8:32: ‘He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously
give us all things?’ That is, they ask, if God did the hard work providing a way for salvation, can he not also keep men in it to the end?

## The Conditional Security of Believers

### The False Doctrine of "Once Saved, Always Saved"

The doctrine of ‘once saved, always saved’ suggests that the Christian, once truly saved, can never do anything to forfeit his salvation and be finally lost in hell. This belief means that Christians have an unconditional security in Christ. They suggest that any person who appears to be a Christian and falls away was never truly converted in the first place. They believe that Christians do sin; but when they sin, they are punished in this life and forfeit privileges in heaven but not entrance into heaven.

### The Conditional Security of the Believer

The Scriptures teach that God’s grace and favor continue to be abundantly given to the believer who continues to keep faith and to keep doing God’s will from the heart. The issue is not, ‘can God save sinners?’ He can and does! Nor is the issue, ‘What is the outcome of those who never believe?’ They are condemned (John 3:18). The issue is ‘What will happen to the born again Christian who willingly turns his back on God and forsakes Him by turning to a life of neglect and sin?’ Unconditional security suggests that he is still saved; conditional security says that he is lost.

If conditional security is taught in the Scriptures, then one would expect conditional statements in the Scriptures regarding salvation. A conditional statement has a qualification to it. It may use the word ‘if’ such as in John 8:31; or it may use a relative clause describing the kind of person who meets the qualification, i.e., ‘he that’ as in Mark 16:16. The problem with the doctrine of unconditional security is that it ignores the conditional, qualifying statements in Scripture about whom the grace of God saves:

### Passages That Teach Conditional Security of Christians

- John 8:31,32 ‘if you abide (continue, remain) in my word’
- John 8:51 ‘if anyone keeps my word’
- John 15:2,6,10 ‘if anyone does not abide. . .if you keep my commandments’
- Rom. 8:12,13 ‘if living to the flesh, you must die’
- 1 Cor. 15:1,2 ‘if you hold fast the word’
- Gal. 5:1-4 ‘if you receive circumcision (go back to the Law)’
- Gal. 6:7-9 ‘if we do not grow weary’
- Col. 1:21-23 ‘if you continue’
- Heb. 3:12-14 ‘if we hold fast’
- Heb. 10:26-31 ‘if we go on sinning willfully, . . .no more sacrifice for sins’
- 10:29 ‘he who has trampled the Son of God, treated blood as unholy, insulted the Spirit’
- Heb. 10:35-39 ‘if he shrinks back’
- 2 Pet. 1:5-11 ‘if these qualities are yours, you will never stumble’
- 2 Pet. 2:20-22 ‘if he is entangled and overcome, then the last state is worse than the first’ (these are Christians 2 Pet. 1:3,4)
- 1 John 1:6,7 ‘if we walk in the light’
- 1 John 1:9 ‘if we confess our sins’
• 1 John 2:24,25 ‘if (what you heard from the beginning) remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father.’

*If there were only one Scriptural condition in this list, that would be enough to show that our salvation is conditional.*

**Some Warning and Exhortations:**
1 Cor. 9:24-27 ‘make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize’
1 Cor. 10:1-12 ‘if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!’
Gal. 5:19-21 Paul’s warning to Christians about works of the flesh that might keep them from entering the kingdom of heaven.
Rev. 2:10 ‘Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life’

**The Present Tense of Salvation**
John 5:24 ‘whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.’ This passage observes the basic truth that the believer has eternal life and does not consider the person who stops believing. Note John 8:51: ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death.’ The whole truth blends both passages rather than ignoring either. John 3:36 says, ‘He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.’ One has eternal life as long as he believes and obeys.

**Can a person stop believing?**
Psa. 106:12 ‘they believed His words’
106:13 ‘they quickly forgot His works’
106:21 ‘they forgot God their Savior’
106:24 ‘they did not believe His word’
Luke 8:11-13 ‘they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away’
1 Tim. 1:19,20 ‘made shipwreck of the faith’
1 Tim. 4:1 ‘fall away from the faith’
1 Tim. 5:12 ‘cast off the faith’
2 Tim. 2:18 ‘upset (overthrow) the faith of some’
Heb. 3:12 ‘brethren, . . .in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from living God.’

**Objections:**
“No one can separate us from the hand or the love of God.”

Two precious promises are found in John 10:27-29 and Rom. 8:35-39, which state that nothing is able to separate us from God. These verses, however, do not take into account that a person may decide to separate himself from God. Jude 21 advises us to ‘keep yourselves in the love of God’; and John 15:9,10 teaches that we must abide in his love. No one can separate us from God, but we are able to forsake Him.

Christians can fall away!

“If a Christian falls, they were never converted in the first place.”

But note Heb. 6:4-6. Those who fell away were at one time saved! They were ‘once enlightened’ (cf. Heb. 10:32; Col. 1:13,14); ‘tasted the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,39);
tasted the good word, and tasted the powers of the age to come.’ These people willfully fell away from God by rejecting Jesus Christ. It was impossible to renew them to repentance because they did not want to repent (Heb. 10:26-29). God is speaking of these 'cases' and not all cases; some are brought to repentance (Acts 8:14-24). Notice also Gal. 5:1-4 speaks of those who fall from grace as having been “severed” from Christ. One cannot be cut off from that which one has never been united. In 2 Pet. 2:20-22, we have some who have escaped the defilement of the world returning to sin. One can only escape that defilement through the blood of Jesus. Speaking of a washed sow is meaningless unless they were washed clean from sin.
Appendix I

Arminian Theology

ARMINIUS, JACOBUS (1559–1609)

Dutch theologian; founder of an anti-Calvinist Reformed theology

Arminius was born in the Netherlands during the Spanish occupation, at Oudewater near Utrecht. His father, an armorer or smith, died around the time of the boy’s birth, so Arminius was educated under the direction and at the expense of family friends who recognized his abilities as a student. He had just entered Marburg University (Germany) when news came of the infamous Oudewater massacre by the Spanish. Arminius returned home to learn that his mother and several of his brothers and sisters had been among the victims.

When the new University of Leiden opened nearby in 1576, Arminius was the twelfth student enrolled. That seems to have been the first public recording of his Latinized name (Jacobus Arminius; he had been born Jacob Harmenszoon). At Leiden he adopted the controversial theology of the French scholar Peter Ramus (1515–1572), and later went on to study at the Geneva Academy (1582), which was then headed by Theodore Beza, Calvin’s successor. Because Arminius’s defense of Ramus angered the Genevan authorities, he left briefly for Basel (1583). There he was offered a doctorate but declined, convinced he would not bring honor to the title.

After returning to Geneva, Arminius must have been more prudent, for in 1585 Beza wrote to the Amsterdam city rulers (who were sponsoring the young man’s education), commending his ability and diligence highly and encouraging a continuance of their “kindness and liberality.” Perhaps significantly, Beza made no mention of Arminius’s theology. After a short visit to Italy, Arminius returned home, was ordained, and in 1588 became one of the ministers of Amsterdam. His 1590 marriage to a merchant’s daughter gave him influential links.

From the outset Arminius’s sermons on Romans 7 drew the fire of “high” Calvinists who disliked his views on grace and predestination. (Grace is the unmerited favor God shows toward sinners. Predestination is the biblical doctrine that God determines beforehand who will be saved.) High Calvinists held that although God’s saving grace is completely unmerited, he extends it only to those whom he predestines to salvation. Arminius disagreed. In 1592 a colleague formally accused him of Pelagianism (an emphasis on free will, among other things, that took form in the fifth century), overdependence on the early church fathers, deviation from the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism (two early Calvinist standards), and erroneous views on predestination. When challenged, however, his critics proved reluctant to substantiate the charges—and the city authorities were on his side. The question of predestination was not systematically raised until Arminius became professor of theology at Leiden (1603–1609), where he spent the last six years of his life in controversy.

In his attempt to give the human will a more active role in salvation than orthodox Calvinism conceded, Arminius came to teach a conditional election in which a person’s free will might or might not affect the divine offer of salvation. Nevertheless, it is important to distinguish between Arminius’s teaching and what later became known as Arminianism, which was more liberal in its view of free will and of related doctrines than was its founder. Arminius’s views were never systematically worked out until the year after his death, when his followers issued a declaration called the Remonstrance (1610), which dissented in several points from orthodox Calvinism. It held, among other things, that God’s predestination was conditioned by human choice, that the gospel could be freely accepted or rejected, and that a person who had become a Christian could “fall from grace” or lose salvation.
A mild-tempered man, Arminius nonetheless spoke his mind in controversy and characteristically defended his position from Scripture. His friend Peter Bertius paid tribute to the oft-misunderstood scholar when he declared at his funeral that those who truly knew Arminius could not sufficiently esteem him.

J. D. DOUGLAS

Theology

The Arminians suggested five, anti-Calvinist corrections, which are summarized below:

- **Conditional Election:** God has decreed to save through Jesus Christ, out of fallen and sinful mankind, those foreknown by Him who through the grace of the Holy Spirit believe in Christ; but God leaves in sin those foreseen, who are incorrigible and unbelieving.

- **Universal Atonement:** Christ's death was suffered on behalf of all men, but God elects for salvation only those who believe in Christ.

- **Free Will with Partial Depravity:** Freedom of will is man's natural state, not a spiritual gift - and thus free will was not lost in the Fall. The grace of Christ works upon all men to influence them for good, but only those who freely choose to agree with grace by faith and repentance are given new spiritual power to make effectual the good they otherwise impotently intend. Wesley revised this view, stating that humans were in fact totally depraved and completely corrupted by original sin, but that God's prevenient grace allowed free will to operate.

- **Resistible Grace:** The grace of God works for good in all men, and brings about newness of life through faith. But grace can be resisted even by the regenerate.

- **Uncertain Perseverance:** Those who are incorporated into Christ by a true faith have power given them through the assisting grace of the Holy Spirit, sufficient to enable them to persevere in the faith. But it may be possible for a believer to fall from grace.

Reformed reaction

The Calvinists responded to the Arminian position at the Synod of Dort, with a rebuttal against the charge that Reformed churches relieve men of responsibility for their own sin, or teach that God is the author of evil. The Synod also reaffirmed the Calvinist position on the five points of Arminianism, without requiring the doctrine of predestination as advocated by Gomarus. The Synod's point-by-point rebuttal of the five articles have been, since then, popularly referred to as 'the five points of Calvinism', commonly abbreviated TULIP.

Prevenient grace is divine grace which precedes human decision. It exists prior to and without reference to anything humans may have done. As humans are corrupted by the effects of sin, prevenient grace allows persons to engage their God-given free will to choose the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ or to reject that salvific offer.
Thomas Oden of Drew University defines prevenient grace as, "...the grace that begins to enable one to choose further to cooperate with saving grace. By offering the will the restored capacity to respond to grace, the person then may freely and increasingly become an active, willing participant in receiving the conditions for justification."

The Doctrine in Scripture

Scriptures used to support the doctrine include:

- Jeremiah 1:5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you..." (ESV)
- Jeremiah 31:3: "...I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." (KJV)
- Ezekiel 34:11, 16: "For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out...I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak..." (ESV)
- Luke 19:10: "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
- John 6:44: "No man can come unto me, unless the Father who hath sent me, draw him..."
- Romans 2:4: "...the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance..."
- Philippians 2:12-13: "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that worketh in you according to his good pleasure, both to will and to do."
- 1 John 4:19: "We love him, because he first loved us."

General Information

Arminianism, which takes its name from Jacobus Arminius (Jakob Harmensen), is a moderate theological revision of Calvinism that limits the significance of Predestination. Arminius (1560 - 1609) was a Dutch Reformed theologian who studied at Leiden and Geneva. He became a professor at Leiden in 1603 and spent the rest of his life defending against strict Calvinists his position that God's sovereignty and human free will are compatible. He sought without success revision of the Dutch Reformed (Belgic) Confession; nevertheless, he was very influential in Dutch Protestantism.

A Remonstrance in 1610 gave the name Remonstrants to the Arminian party. They were condemned by the Synod of Dort (1618 - 19), but later received toleration. English revisionist theology of the 17th century was called Arminian, although possibly without direct influence from Holland. John Wesley accepted the term for his theological position and published The Arminian Magazine. The tension between the Arminian and Calvinist positions in theology became quiescent until Karl Barth sparked its revival in the 20th century.

Frederick A Norwood

Bibliography
Appendix II
The Holy Spirit and Conversion I and II

That the Holy Spirit is involved in conversion is rarely if ever denied by any Christian. There are three views of how the Holy Spirit works in conversion:

1. He works through a direct operation on the heart of the lost
2. He works directly on the heart in conjunction with the preaching of the Word
3. He works indirectly through the Word, the preaching of the gospel.

In recent centuries most Protestants believed that there must be a “direct operation of the Holy Spirit” upon a sinner for that sinner to be saved. Many religious groups employ practices that emphasize the need for a convicted sinner to “come forward” to the “mourners’ bench” and wait for an emotional experience, which they were told was the coming of the Holy Spirit. This view arose theologically from John Calvin, who taught that man was predestined to be either saved or lost by a sovereign God. Nothing he could do would cause him to be saved if he not among the “elect.”

Total Hereditary Depravity
Unconditional Election
Limited Atonement
Irresistible Grace
Perseverance of the Saints

David Steele and Curtis Thomas in *The Five Points of Calvinism Defined, Defended, Documented* explain Efficacious or Irresistible Grace this way:

Simply stated, this doctrine asserts that the Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ. He inevitably applies salvation to every sinner whom He intends to save, and it is His intention to save the elect.

The gospel invitation extends a call to salvation to every one who hearts its message. It invites all men without distinction to drink freely of the water of life and live. It promises salvation to all who repent and believe. But this outward general call, extended to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ. Why? Because men are by nature dead in sin and under its power. They are of themselves unable and unwilling to forsake their evil ways and to turn to Christ for mercy. Consequently, the unregenerate will not respond to the gospel call to repentance and faith. No amount of external threatenings or promises will cause blind, deaf, dead, rebellious sinners to bow before Christ as Lord and to look to Him alone for salvation. Such an act of faith and submission is contrary to the lost man’s nature.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit, in order to bring God’s elect to salvation, extends to them a special inward call in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ. The inward change wrought in the elect sinner enables him to understand and believe spiritual truth; in the spiritual realm he is given the seeing eye and the hearing ear. The Spirit creates within him a new heart and a

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new nature. This is accomplished through regeneration or the new birth by which the sinner is made a child of God and is given spiritual life...Thus a once dead sinner is drawn to Christ by the inward supernatural call of the Spirit who through regeneration makes him alive and creates within him faith and repentance.24

The soul who sought salvation waited for an emotional experience which would give him an assurance or guarantee of his salvation. This guarantee assured the person that he was saved and could never be lost. This grace was irresistible. Since the Holy Spirit Himself was said to be the source of these experiences (automatic actions, speaking in ecstatic utterances), the person would feel convinced within himself of his salvation and the presence of God, a “better felt than told” experience.

Jividen observes, “It was no wonder that students of the Scriptures and reasonable men saw such doctrines as false and such experiences as mere emotional excitement.”25 Some have reacted to this “direct operation of the Holy Spirit” in conversion by going to the other extreme. They deny that the Holy Spirit has any work in the world at all today. Their method of refuting the false teaching of Calvinism is to argue the Holy Spirit does not do any work at all.

Instead of showing that such emotional experiences and spiritual exercises were not from the Holy Spirit, they ended up denying much of what the Holy Spirit does do. In some writings of that time (19th and 20th centuries) the reader would think that the Holy Spirit should be put in a box and shipped back to the first century where He belonged. In other writings of that time one would think that the Holy Spirit was imprisoned in the Bible and was forbidden to have free course in the world.26

The Holy Spirit does work in conversion. He works through the Word, but the Word does not reveal any example of emotional experiences or paranormal happenings at the point of conversion. Some examples of conversion in Calvinistic religious groups have more in common with pagan religions than with Biblical accounts. “Barking,” “praying through,” and “ecstatic utterances” were never signs of salvation in the New Testament.

How does the Spirit work?

He works through the Word by inspiring the apostles and prophets who wrote the Word (2 Pet. 1:21). Unquestionably, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17).

26 Jividen, 113. Jividen notes: Within the Restoration Movement were both extreme views of the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion. Alexander Campbell, following John Locke’s theory of knowledge, defended the exclusive agency of the Word of God in conversion. Jessie B. Ferguson in Nashville and W. S. Russell in Illinois held to the “direct operation of the Holy Spirit” in conversion. Tolbert Fanning became the most outspoken advocate of the view that the Holy Spirit can work in the world only through the Word of God. More recently Guy N. Woods and Foy E. Wallace Jr. argued this view. Robert Richardson, though denying the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, advocated that the Holy Spirit did personally dwell in the child of God.
The Holy Spirit is involved in baptism as much as the water is involved (see John 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13; Tit. 3:5).

The Holy Spirit is involved in conversion as God's gift (Acts 2:38; 5:32), as God's pledge and seal that the convert is God's child (1 Cor. 6:18-19; 2 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30). The Holy Spirit who dwells in the Christian gives him identity as God's child and as a brother or sister to all of God's children. This gift is received when one is baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38).

In the conversion of men, one should not rule out the Providence of God. The Scriptures are the means by which faith comes (Rom. 10:17) and are all-sufficient (2 Tim. 3:16-17). But does this mean we should rule God out of the picture? Can we arbitrarily say God has nothing to do with getting sinful man and His convicting Word together through providence?

The example of Onesimus comes to mind. As a slave of Philemon, he came to Paul in Rome, where he learned the gospel and became a Christian. In time Paul sent him back to Philemon with a letter encouraging Philemon to receive him as a brother. In the letter Paul infers that “perhaps” the providence of God played a part in his conversion. “For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord” (Philemon 15-16). While we do not wish to attribute more to God than Paul does, neither do we wish to rule out that God works in the world today.

Wives who cannot teach their unconverted husbands by a spoken message may nevertheless win their husbands by living godly lives (1 Pet. 3:1,2). While the written word is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), the lived word of God can and does influence people to be receptive to the gospel. The Holy Spirit can and does work in both to bring about conversion.

We must also consider the command from the Holy Spirit through Paul: “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak” (Col. 4:2-4). If the Spirit works only through the Word, why does the Spirit move Paul to command Christians to pray that God will open a door for the Word? Opening the door for the Word is not the same as preaching the Word; it is preparatory. We do not know how God works in such matters to prepare opportunities and hearts so that they may hear and obey the gospel. Yet we are commanded to pray to God to open doors for the Word and to pray for the preacher that he may be bold. Do we believe such prayers matter? If we do, then we must admit that the Holy Spirit (God) is involved in opening doors for the Word to work.

In determining the truth, one should not look to emotional experiences but to the Scriptures themselves. Anytime one’s feelings or experiences contradict the Scriptures, one must realize that while feelings may deceive, the Scriptures are always true.

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (John 6:63).

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16).

But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person
believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation (Rom. 10:8-10).

In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures ... Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls (James 1:18, 21).

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, “ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER.” And this is the word which was preached to you (1 Pet. 1:22-25).

In the parable of the soils, the seed is the word of God (Matt. 13:19-23; Luke 8:11). Scattering the seed, in which is life, is preaching the Word. Owen Olbricht said, “Without the Spirit there would be no Word; without the Word there could be no life or birth; and without life and birth no one could become a member of the kingdom.” There is no indication here that a direct operation of the Holy Spirit brought about conversion; rather the seed of the Word brought about the life.

At this point we must raise a caution about the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. We must understand that the source of the Word of God is the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21). Jimmy Jividen said:

The Word of God and the Holy Spirit are not the same. They are, however, related in their work in the world. The Holy Spirit inspired the Word of God, and the Word of God reveals the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the agent, and the Word of God is the instrument of much of the Spirit’s work in the world.

The Scriptures and the Holy Spirit cannot be separated any more than an agent can be separated from the instrument he uses. When the writer of Hebrews quoted Psalm 95:7, he said, “the Holy Spirit says” (Heb. 3:7). Though David (Heb. 4:7) was the human author of this psalm, the Hebrew writer understood that David was inspired by the Holy Spirit in writing it. David wrote it, but God through the Holy Spirit said it.

We must understand that the Holy Spirit does His work through the Word of God in many ways. Many of the things the Scriptures attribute to the Holy Spirit are also attributed to the Word of God. Jimmy Jividen gives us this chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Holy Spirit</th>
<th>Word of God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begotten/Born Again</td>
<td>John 3:3-5</td>
<td>James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saved</td>
<td>Titus 3:5</td>
<td>James 1:21; Acts 11:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctified</td>
<td>2 Thessalonians 2:13</td>
<td>John 17:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convicts</td>
<td>John 16:8-11</td>
<td>Acts 2:37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guides</td>
<td>John 16:13</td>
<td>2 Timothy 3:15-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforts</td>
<td>John 14:16-18, 26</td>
<td>Romans 15:4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many things done by the Holy Spirit are done through the Word of God. If you were to dig a hole with a shovel, it could be said that a person dug the hole or the shovel dug the hole. Both would be correct. One statement tells the who; the other statement tells the instrument that was used.

The Word of God reveals the work of the Holy Spirit. “One would know nothing of the Holy Spirit were it not for the Word of God. Just as the Scriptures are “God breathed” by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is revealed by the Scriptures.”

How the Spirit Works in Conversion

The Spirit played a great role in the Day of Pentecost. The apostles were “all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:4). This is the first time that the apostles preached “repentance for forgiveness of sins” in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47; Acts 2:5). Peter’s emphasis was not that day on feelings or experiences; he urged the people to “give heed to my words” (2:14). When they heard Peter preach the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus, knowing that they were guilty of his death, they were pierced to the heart by his words (Acts 2:37). Peter taught them to “repent and be baptized.” Those who “had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls” (2:41). Notice that the added were the obedient to the Word. In 2:47, the Scripture reveals, “And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (2:47). Those who gave heed to the preaching of the word were obedient in repentance and baptism; these are the ones saved and added to their number (i.e., the number in the church, God’s kingdom, Acts 4:4; 5:14; 6:1,7).

In the conversion stories of the book of Acts, one thing stands out clearly: those who were saved first heard the preaching of the gospel. The Spirit worked through the “sword of the Spirit” to pierce hearts and change hearts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Conversion</th>
<th>The Holy Spirit’s influence on the messenger</th>
<th>The Holy Spirit’s influence on the convert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>Filled apostles with the Holy Spirit and gave them utterance (2:4)</td>
<td>Pierced to the heart by the things they heard (2:37), they repented and were baptized (2:38) They gladly received Peter’s word (2:41)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip at Samaria</td>
<td>Philip worked signs (Acts 8:6-7, 13) as he preached the gospel</td>
<td>The Samaritans believed the preaching and were baptized (8:12), witnessing the signs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopian Eunuch</td>
<td>Angel of the Lord spoke to Philip (8:26); the Spirit told Philip to join the chariot (8:29)</td>
<td>Philip preached (evangelized) Jesus to him (8:35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9, 22, 26)</td>
<td>Jesus appears to Saul and tells him to go into the city where he will be told what he must do (Acts 9:6). The Lord in a vision sent Ananias to Saul (9:10-18) to heal him and that he might be</td>
<td>Ananias was to tell Saul what he must do. Ananias told Saul to be baptized and wash away his sins (22:16)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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30 Ibid.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cornelius (Acts 10 and 11)</td>
<td>Peter has a vision (Acts 10:9-16) whose purpose is to open his eyes to the need of the Gentiles for the repentance that leads to life (11:15). The falling of the Spirit on Cornelius was not to save but to convince the Jews of the open door for the Gentiles (11:17-18).</td>
<td>Cornelius has vision to send to Joppa for Peter (Acts 10:3-8). Peter will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household’ (11:14). Though the Holy Spirit filled the household of Cornelius and they spoke in tongues, the report was that the Word of God came to the Gentiles (11:1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lydia</td>
<td>Paul’s vision of the Macedonian call (Acts 16:9-10)</td>
<td>was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul (Acts 16:14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jailer</td>
<td>Paul cast out the spirit of a slave girl, which landed him in jail. (Acts 16:17-21). God caused an earthquake and the freeing of the prisoners (16:25-26).</td>
<td>Paul spoke the word of the Lord to the Jailer and his household (16:32). They were baptized, having believed (16:33-34).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thessalonica</td>
<td>The gospel came with the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:5).</td>
<td>Paul reasoned with Jews in synagogue, explaining and giving evidence that Christ had to suffer. Some were persuaded (17:1-4). The gospel (word of God) does its work in those who believe (1 Thess. 2:13). The Jews were “hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved” (2:16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berea</td>
<td></td>
<td>Noble minded, they studied the Scriptures to see if the things Paul spoke were so (17:11). They believed after hearing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinth</td>
<td>Paul was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:4). God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe (1 Cor. 1:21).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelve disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19)</td>
<td>When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5). After Paul laid his hands on them, they received the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues and prophesying (19:6-7). Paul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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31 Note Appendix A on “The Case of Cornelius”
reasoned and persuaded Ephesians concerning the kingdom of God (18:8); some became hardened and disobedient.

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:13-14).

The consistent pattern of these examples shows that when the Holy Spirit intended to act directly, He acted upon the messenger. When the Holy Spirit worked on the convert, He worked through the Word. The Holy Spirit often used messengers to work signs of miracles in order to confirm the Word (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4). But the message of the gospel is the important means by which the Holy Spirit convicted and converted sinners. While the Holy Spirit supported and confirmed the message through signs, the Word itself without signs is fully able to bring about a change in the soul and life of a Christian.
### Appendix III

#### Examples of Conversion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Hebrews 11:1-4</th>
<th>Acts 2:1-41</th>
<th>Repent of Sin</th>
<th>Confessing the Name of Jesus</th>
<th>Being Baptized</th>
<th>Salvation, Forgiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pentecost</td>
<td>2:14-41</td>
<td>Acts 2:21-47</td>
<td>Repent</td>
<td>Confess</td>
<td>Baptized 2:38,41</td>
<td>Forgiveness 2:38,47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samaria Acts</td>
<td>Believed 8:13</td>
<td>Acts 8:12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baptized 8:12,13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunuch</td>
<td>Believed 8:36,37</td>
<td>Acts 8:37</td>
<td>Confessed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Baptized 8:38</td>
<td>Rejoiced 8:39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jailer</td>
<td>Believed 16:31</td>
<td>Acts 16:31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baptized, having believed 16:33,34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinthians</td>
<td>Believed 18:8</td>
<td>Acts 18:8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Baptized 18:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV

By What Are We Saved?

By faith (Rom. 5:1)
By enduring to the end (Matt. 10:22; 24:13)
By God (Mk. 10:26-27)
By faith and baptism (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)
By striving to enter the narrow door (Luke 13:23-24)
   Through Jesus (John 3:17)
By the things Jesus says (John 5:34)
By entering through the door, Jesus Christ (John 10:9)
By calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13)
By receiving His word and being baptized (Acts 2:40-41)
   By the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12)
   By the words Peter will speak (Acts 11:14)
   Through the grace of the Lord (Acts 15:11)
   By believing in the Lord (Acts 16:31)
   By His blood (Rom. 5:9)
   By the life of Jesus (Rom. 5:10)
   In hope (Rom. 8:24)
By confessing with the mouth and believing in the heart (Rom. 10:9)
   By the power of God in the word of the cross (1 Cor. 1:18)
By receiving, standing in and holding fast to the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-2)
   By grace (Eph. 2:5)
   By grace through faith; it is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8)
   By hearing what Paul was speaking (1 Th. 2:16)
   By loving the truth (2 Th. 2:10)
   By calling us with a holy calling (2 Tim. 1:9)
By the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit according to His mercy (Tit. 3:5-7)
By the gospel (Rom. 1:16)
   By losing our lives for His sake (Mt. 16:25)
   By the coming of the Son of Man (Luke 9:56)
   By the sayings of Jesus Christ (Jn 12:47-50)
   By the foolishness of the message preached (1 Cor. 1:21)
By obedience to the One who is the source of salvation (Heb. 5:8-9)
   By the intercession of Jesus Christ (Heb. 7:25)
   By receiving with humility the implanted word (James 1:21)
   By an active, working faith (James 2:14-24)
By one who turns a sinner from the error of his way (James 5:19-20)
   By snatching others from the fire (Jude 23)
   By the word (Acts 13:26)
   By the spoken word of God (Acts 13:46-47)
   By godly sorrow leading to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10)
   By listening to the message of truth (Eph. 1:13-14)
By working out one’s salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:13)
   By sanctification of the Spirit and faith in the truth (2 Th. 2:13)
By paying attention to ourselves and to our teaching (1 Tim. 4:16)
   By the grace of God (Tit. 2:11-14)
By not neglecting the teaching (Heb. 2:1-3)
   By the outcome of our faith (1 Pet. 1:9)
   By the milk of the word (1 Pet. 2:2)

**By What Are We Forgiven?**

By seeing, hearing and understanding (Mk 4:12)
   By loving much (Luke 7:47-48)
By the blood of the covenant (Mt 26:28)
   By repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38)
Repent and prayer demanded of Christian (Acts 8:22)
   In Him through His blood (Eph. 1:7)
By being transferred into Him, into the Kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13-14)
   By being made alive together with Him in baptism (Col. 2:12-13)
Without shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness (Heb. 9:22)
By prayer and confessing sins for the Christian (James 5:15-16)
   By confessing our sins as Christians (1 John 1:9)

**By What Are We Justified?**

As a gift by His grace (Rom. 3:24)
   By faith apart from works of the Law (Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16)
      By faith (Rom. 5:1)
      By His blood (Rom. 5:9)
   By the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit by Hi s grace (Tit. 3:5-7)
      By works and not by faith alone (James 2:18-26)
      By our words (Matt. 12:36-37)

The notion that we are saved by grace is true, but it is not the whole truth. According to
the Scriptures there are many factors that are essential to our salvation. We cannot segregate
one concept to the exclusion to all the others. Understanding the whole truth means that we
understand all that the Bible says on a subject rather than separating out only one factor. This is
why salvation by grace is true, but salvation by grace *alone* must be false.
Appendix V
Baptism with the Holy Spirit

The idea of being baptized “with the Holy Spirit” appears five times in the New Testament:

- Matt. 3:11 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”
- Mark 1:8 “I baptized you with water; but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”
- Luke 3:16 John answered and said to them all, “As for me, I baptize you with water; but One is coming who is mightier than I, and I am not fit to untie the thong of His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- Acts 1:4-5 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”
- Acts 11:15-18 “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

Jimmy Jividen notes from these five passages we can conclude the following about the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

- It was predicted by John the Baptist and contrasted with his own baptism in water.
- It was promised by Jesus in the context of discussing the kingdom of God.
- It was identified by Peter as being related to the events on the day of Pentecost and at Cornelius’ house. What happened at Cornelius’ house was the same gift. When the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius’ house, it reminded Peter of the promise that Jesus had made about baptism with the Holy Spirit. This caused him to conclude that God approved of baptizing Gentiles as well as Jews.32

Four distinctive things separate the baptism with the Holy Spirit from both John’s baptism and Christian baptism:33

1. Baptism with the Holy Spirit cannot be commanded. It is not something one can do for himself or by himself. It is accomplished by a direct act of God without any prescribed conditions on the part of the one being baptized. No one in the Scriptures ever prayed to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus Himself administered the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The apostles could not baptize anyone with the Holy Spirit. They could not accomplish it by the laying on of

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33 Ibid., 35.
hands, by prayer, or by some emotional exercise. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to the apostles and gave the Spirit to those whom He chose.

3. The baptism with the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with salvation in the Scriptures. God was the source of baptism with the Holy Spirit. Its purpose was inspiration and confirmation of the message (Heb. 2:3-4).

4. Baptism with the Holy Spirit was connected with men being able to speak in foreign languages that they had not learned in the normal way. Their speaking in foreign tongues was a miracle. These tongues were not some sort of ecstatic utterances or emotional feeling, but were discernible languages (Acts 2:5-13).

### The Differences between Water Baptism and Baptism with the Holy Spirit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point of Comparison</th>
<th>Baptism with the Holy Spirit</th>
<th>Water Baptism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Administered by</td>
<td>The Lord Himself (Matt. 3:11; John 1:33)</td>
<td>By men, those doing the teaching (Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 1:14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Those being baptized</td>
<td>Twelve Apostles and Cornelius’ household</td>
<td>Any penitent believer For all nations and required of every creature (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Baptized in or with</td>
<td>The Holy Spirit</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Purpose</td>
<td>Confirmation from God</td>
<td>Forgiveness of sins and gift of the Holy Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Whose choice</td>
<td>God</td>
<td>Whosoever wills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Accompanied by</td>
<td>Miracles</td>
<td>Preaching and repentance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Prerequisites</td>
<td>None given</td>
<td>Faith, Repentance and Confession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. In the “name”</td>
<td>No name at all, since it was not performed by man</td>
<td>“into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:19) in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; 8:14-16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Duration</td>
<td>Only two events (Acts 2 &amp; 10)</td>
<td>For all time (Eph. 4:4-6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Nature</td>
<td>Received as a promise (Acts 1:4-5)</td>
<td>Obeyed as a command (Acts 10:48)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
The preposition “by” in English is εν in Greek and may be translated “by,” “with,” or “in.” This preposition is used every time baptism “with the Holy Spirit” is mentioned. When one is baptized in water into the body of Christ, it can also be said that he is baptism “en” the Holy Spirit. Jividen says:

This does not mean that water baptism is the same as the technical phrase “baptism with the Holy Spirit” predicted by John and promised by Jesus. The chart shows some of their differences. Even though water baptism is closely connected with the Holy Spirit, it cannot be understood as “baptism with the Holy Spirit” promised by Jesus.34

Baptism in water, even in the case of the apostles, would not take the place of or be a substitute for Holy Spirit baptism. Neither would the Holy Spirit baptism alone be sufficient. As apostles, they first had to be baptized with water (Matt. 3:11; Luke 7:29-30; Acts 1:22-23). Even in the case of the household of Cornelius, Peter commanded them to be baptized in water (Acts 10:48).

The Holy Spirit Baptism Promised

John the Baptist said, “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:11). Notice that the apostles were present at this point (Acts 1:22-23).

Jesus promised the baptism with the Holy Spirit to the apostles.

Note Acts 1:

1The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. 3To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. 4Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me; 5for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

6So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?” 7He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority, 8but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

9And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. 11They also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

Notice that the promise was not made to all mankind, nor to a multitude, nor to the “hundred and twenty,” but Jesus made this promise to the apostles alone. As the chapter ends the apostles gathered in an upper room to consider a replacement for Judas Iscariot. The lot fell

34Jimmy Jividen, 37-38.
on Matthias, and he was “added to the eleven apostles” (Acts 1:26). The word “apostles” is the last noun in chapter one and has been the specified group throughout the chapter. Remember that the New Testament was not broken into chapters until the fourth century (Codex Vaticanus). If we read the last few verses of chapter one with the first four verses of chapter two, we can easily see who received the baptism with the Holy Spirit:

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24 And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen 25to occupy this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” 26And they drew lots for them, and the lot fell to Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. 4And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance.

5 Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. 6And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. 7They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?

14But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them:

33Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He [Christ] has poured forth this which you both see and hear.

Notice that the ones speaking were Galileans (cf. Acts 1:9-11), Peter taking his stand with the other eleven apostles. Their speaking was a demonstration of the power of the Spirit (Acts 1). The Lord poured forth the ability to speak in tongues as a fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Why Were the Apostles Baptized With the Holy Spirit?35

1. That they might “sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:28-30). They received power when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts 1:8).
2. That they might be empowered to function as apostles (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:49). This supernatural power would help them reveal and confirm the gospel, the New Testament for all time to come (Heb. 2:3-4).
3. That they might be able ministers of the New Testament (2 Cor. 3:6).
4. That they might be enabled to fulfill the promise of Jesus of doing greater works (John 14:12). They preached the gospel, bringing people into the kingdom.
5. That they might confirm the word of the gospel (Heb. 2:3-4).
6. That the Spirit might be their Comforter or Helper (John 14:16; Rom. 15:4; 1 Thess. 4:18).

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7. That the Spirit might teach the apostles and bring to their remembrance all things (John 14:26; cf. Neh. 9:20, 30).
8. That the Spirit might guide them into all truth (John 16:13).
9. That the Spirit might show the apostles things to come (John 16:13). He foretold of the apostasy and predicted false teachers would come (2 Thess. 2:4; Acts 20:29-30; 1 Tim. 4:1-3).
10. That they might be enabled to lay hands on others to confer the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit on them (Acts 8:18). The apostles Peter and John could do what Philip could not do (Acts 8:14-19).
11. That they might make known the terms of forgiveness of sins (John 20:23).
12. That they might have the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19) “to bind on earth what has been bound in heaven and loose on earth what has been loosed in heaven.”
13. That the apostles might be enabled as “witnesses” (Luke 24:48). Jesus told them to tarry for this power. They could testify as to the power God had given them (Acts 2:33).

“One function of an apostle was to be a witness; and a witness cannot have a successor. If a prominent and important witness in a legal case dies, we can’t have some neighbor, or anyone else, come in and take his place, and testify in his stead. A witness can’t have a successor! Since that is one of the prominent functions of an apostle—to be a witness—it follows therefore that we can no other apostles. These New Testament apostles are our only apostles.... They are on their thrones (Luke 22:30).... They have ruled, and do now rule; they have made inspired decisions and they are on record. Every decision necessary, every truth ever to be revealed, has been revealed by them and has been confirmed. This truth needs no revelation; and it needs no new miraculous confirmation. Thus, my friends, when we follow the apostles’ teaching in the New Testament, we are being governed and guided by the Holy Spirit through them. The New Testament apostles are our apostles—and we don’t need any living apostles”.... This was one purpose of the Holy Spirit baptism for the apostles (Acts 2:1-4).


14. That they might be enabled to preach the gospel to all nations (Matt. 28:19). There was a language barrier in their way, until the Spirit gave them power to speak in the tongues of the nations (Acts 2:1-14).
15. That they church or kingdom might be established. The Holy Spirit came (Acts 2:1-4) upon them with power; and the kingdom came “with power” (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8). Peter revealed that the Holy Spirit fell on us at the beginning (Acts 1:15). We might ask, “the beginning of what?” It is the beginning of the church or the kingdom, which came with power (Mark 9:1).
16. That they might be inspired. They spoke as the Spirit gave them utterance. The gospel is preached through the power of the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven (1 Pet. 1:12). All Scripture is given by inspiration (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
17. That they might be aided in the carrying out of the Great Commission. Whatever was required in the matter of revealing and confirming the great Gospel of Jesus Christ. He guided them into all the truth (John 16:13) for all time (Jude 3).
The Case of Cornelius

Cornelius and his household were also baptized with the Holy Spirit, but not for the purpose of revealing and confirming the New Testament, as were the apostles. The purpose of the baptismal measure of the Holy Spirit at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10, 11) differed in several ways from that which happened on Pentecost. As Peter began to speak (11:15), the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening to the words (Acts 10:44). “All” is compromised of Cornelius’ kinsman and close friends (10:24), “many people” (10:26). They were Gentiles, both male and female, who received this “baptism.” This baptism fell on people who did not expect it (neither the Gentiles nor the Jews). The result of this “falling” was that they spoke in tongues (as did the apostles on Pentecost). Though eight years or so elapsed between Pentecost and this event, Peter could not think of any other case like it. He refers back to the baptism of the Spirit “at the beginning” (Acts 11:15; Acts 2:2-3). This was a miraculous outpouring (10:46), a visible manifestation of God’s power.

The Real Point of This Manifestation

The Spirit did not, nor does He now, have to fall on people to get them to obey the gospel—that is, people who were already understood to be involved in gospel provisions and promises. But these Gentiles did not understand themselves to be acceptable; neither did the Jews think Gentiles were acceptable. It took a miracle, in the first place, to get the Gentiles to send for a Jew, a preacher like Peter. The angel said to him, “Send men to Joppa and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:13-14). Cornelius sent for the preacher; but it took a miracle—the housetop vision—to convince Peter to go over there! Finally, the Spirit said, “Go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them” (10:20). So it took a miracle to make the Gentile send for a Jew; and a miraculous work was required on the preacher himself (a Jew) to get him ready to go to these Gentiles. But when he arrived he said, “God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean” (10:28). These two miracles were for the purpose of getting the preacher and the unsaved together.

Gus Nichols, 109-110

Opening his mouth, Peter said: “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.”

(Acts 10:34-35)

When Peter went back to the church at Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians took issue with him about his preaching to the Gentiles: “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them” (11:3). Their view was that the Gentiles were unclean and unsuitable for the gospel. Only after Peter explained the matter in “orderly sequence” (chronological order and detail), did they hold their peace and remark that God has also granted to Gentiles the repentance that leads to life (11:4, 18). It took miracles to confirm to the Jewish nation that the gospel, as revealed and confirmed by the Holy Spirit, included Gentiles.
Comparing the Baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and at the House of Cornelius

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Pentecost (Acts 2)</th>
<th>Cornelius (Acts 10, 11)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recipients</td>
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<td>Only Gentiles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Miraculous Power</td>
<td>Speaking in tongues, Many signs and wonders (2:43); could lay hands on others (8:18)</td>
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<td>When they received the power of the Spirit</td>
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<td>Expected as a fulfillment of the promise “not many days from now (1:4-8)</td>
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<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To reveal and to confirm the Word (Acts 2; Heb. 2:3-4)</td>
<td>To bear witness that the Gentiles can be saved (Acts 11:15-18; cf. Eph. 2:11-16; 3:6) Fulfills Joel 2:28</td>
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<td>Salvation</td>
<td>Enabled apostles to preach the gospel; those who heard and obeyed were forgiven or saved (Acts 2:38, 41, 47)</td>
<td>Said to the Jews that Gentiles had been granted (the opportunity of) repentance that leads to life (Acts 11:18). Gentiles ordered to be baptized after hearing the Word (10:48)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

One Baptism Now

In 59 AD, Paul wrote, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:4-6). The Spirit baptized the household of Cornelius in ca. 41 AD. The gospel was to go to the Jew first, and then to the Greek (Rom. 1:16). By the time that Paul said in 59 AD there is one baptism, the baptism of the Holy Spirit had served its purpose and was no longer needed. The one baptism left is water baptism, which is for all people in all places for all time (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:19; 1 Pet. 3:21; Titus 3:3-7).
John Calvin

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

John Calvin (July 10, 1509 – May 27, 1564) was an important French Christian theologian during the Protestant Reformation and is the namesake of the system of Christian theology called Calvinism. He was born Jean Chauvin (or Cauvin) in Noyon, Picardie, France, to Gérard Cauvin and Jeanne Lefranc. French was his mother tongue; Calvin derives from the Latin version of his name, Calvinus. Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses in 1517, when Calvin was 8.

In 1523, at the age of 14, Calvin's father, an attorney, sent him to the University of Paris to study humanities and law. By 1532, he was a Doctor of Law at Orléans. His first published work was an edition of the Roman philosopher Seneca's De clementia, accompanied by a thorough commentary.

In 1536, he settled in Geneva, halted in the path of an intended journey to Basel, by the personal persuasion of the reformer William Farel. He pastored in Strasbourg from 1538 until 1541, before returning to Geneva. He would live there until his death in 1564.

Writings by Calvin

Calvin published several revisions of his Institutes of the Christian Religion — a seminal work in Christian theology that is still read today — in Latin in 1536 (at the age of 26) and then in his native French in 1541, with the definitive editions appearing in 1559 and 1560, respectively.

He also produced many volumes of commentary on most of the books of the Bible. For the Old Testament (referring to the Protestant organization of books), he published commentaries for all books except the histories after Joshua (though he did publish his sermons on First Samuel) and the Wisdom literature other than the Book of Psalms. For the New Testament, he omitted only the brief 2nd and 3rd Epistles of John and the Book of Revelation. (Some have suggested that Calvin questioned the canonicity of the Book of Revelation, but his citation of it as authoritative in his other writings casts doubt on that theory.) These commentaries, too, have proved to be of lasting value to students of the Bible, and they are still in print after over 400 years.

Reformed Geneva

John Calvin had been exiled from Geneva because he and his followers were suspected of wanting to create a 'new papacy' and that's why he went to Strasbourg during the time of the Ottoman wars and passed through the cantons of Switzerland. While in Geneva William Farel asked Calvin to help him with the cause of the church. Calvin wrote of Farel's request "I felt as if God from heaven had laid his mighty hand upon me to stop me in my course". Together with Farel, Calvin attempted to institute a number of changes to the city's governance and religious life. They drew up a catechism and a confession of faith, which they insisted all citizens must affirm. The city council refused to adopt Calvin and Farel's creed, and in January 1538 denied them the power to excommunicate, a power they saw as critical to their work. The pair responded with a blanket denial of the Lord's Supper to all Genevans at Easter services. For this the city council expelled them from the city. Farel travelled to Neuchâtel, Calvin to Strasbourg. For three years Calvin served as a lecturer and pastor to a church of French Huguenots in Strasbourg. It was during his exile that Calvin married Idelette de Bure. He also came under the influence of Martin Bucer, who advocated a system of political and ecclesiastical structure along New Testament lines. He continued to follow developments in Geneva, and when Jacopo
Sadoleto, a Catholic cardinal, penned an open letter to the city council inviting Geneva to return to the mother church. Calvin’s response on behalf of embattled Genevan Protestants helped him to regain the respect he had lost. A number of Calvin’s supporters having won election to the Geneva city council, he was invited back to the city in 1541.

Upon his return, armed with the authority to craft the institutional form of the church, Calvin began his program of reform. He established four categories of offices, with distinct hierarchy:

- **Doctors** held an office of theological scholarship and teaching for the edification of the people and the training of other ministers.
- **Pastors** were to preach, to administer the sacraments, and to exercise pastoral discipline, teaching and admonishing the people.
- **Deacons** oversaw institutional charity, including hospitals and anti-poverty programs.
- **Elders** were 12 laymen whose task was to serve as a kind of moral police force, mostly issuing warnings, but referring offenders to the Consistory when necessary.

Critics often look to the Consistory as the emblem of Calvin’s theocratic rule. The Consistory was an ecclesiastical court consisting of the elders and pastors, charged with maintaining strict order in the church caste and among its members. Offenses ranged from propounding false doctrine to moral infractions, such as wild dancing and bawdy singing. Typical punishments were might be required to attend boring public sermons, catechism classes, floggings or torture. Protestants in the 16th century were often subjected to the Catholic charge that they were innovators in doctrine, and that such innovation did lead inevitably to moral decay and, ultimately, the dissolution of society itself. Calvin claimed his wish was to establish the moral legitimacy of the church reformed according to his program, but also to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Recently discovered documentation of Consistory proceedings shows at least some concern for domestic life, and women in particular. For the first time men’s infidelity was punished as harshly as that of women, and the Consistory showed absolutely no tolerance for spousal abuse. The role of the Consistory was complex. It helped to transform Geneva into the city described by Scottish reformer John Knox as ‘the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on the earth since the days of the Apostles.’

Nevertheless, it appears that Calvin was not above using the Consistory to further his own political aims and maintain his absolute control over civil and religious life in Geneva. Calvin moved quickly to respond harshly to any question of his actions. The most notable episodes are the cases of Pierre Ameaux and Jacques Gruet. Calvin was reluctant to ordain Genevans, preferring to choose pastors from the stream of French immigrants pouring into the city for the express purpose of supporting Calvin’s program of reform. When Pierre Ameaux complained about this practice, Calvin took it as an attack on his absolute authority as the authority, and he persuaded the city council to require Ameaux to walk through the town dressed in a hair shirt and begging for mercy in the public squares. Jacques Gruet sided with some of the old Genevan families, who resented the power and methods of the Consistory. He was implicated in an incident in which someone had placed a placard in one of the city’s churches, reading: ‘When too much has been endured revenge is taken.’ Calvin consented to the torture murder of Gruet, who was accused of colluding in a French plot to invade the city. In 1553, Calvin approved of the execution murder by burning of Michael Servetus (viewed by many Unitarians as one of the founders of their religion), for heresy, an act for which he remained unrepentant until his death.