

Does Grace Have an “IF”?

Does the grace of God have an “if” anywhere in Scripture? We know that we are saved by grace as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

But there are other Scriptures that seem to imply that there might be an “if” attached to the grace of God. We will look at four passages in the Scriptures that could imply that there might be an “if” attached to the grace of God, and we will see why that is not the case.

The “If” in Hebrews 3:12-14

For example, we will start with the following passage in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):12** Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

Verse 14 makes it sound like we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, and “if” we don’t, we could lose our salvation.

Does verse 14 really put an “if” in the grace of God this way? Does this verse make it a requirement on our part, that is, something we must do in order to obtain the grace of God or to keep the grace of God? The verse, as it is translated, says that we must “hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end,” in order to remain a partaker of Christ. “If” we do not, the way the verse is translated implies that we could lose our standing as a partaker of Christ, and therefore our salvation.

The verse as it is translated does not tell us what the “beginning of our confidence” that we must hold steadfast actually is. Nevertheless, the concerned reader might wonder if his or her standing as a partaker of Christ is dependent on their holding on to this something until the end. And if they don’t hold on to that something, they could then lose their standing as a “partaker of Christ”.

Let us look at this Scripture in Hebrews, starting in chapter 3, verse 12, as it appears in the Greek.

Hebrews 3:12 Βλέπετε ἀδελφοί μήποτε ἔσται ἐν τινι ὑμῶν

See to it brothers lest to be in anyone of you

καρδία πονηρὰ ἀπιστίας ἐν τῷ ἀφίστημι ἀπὸ

heart an evil of unbelief while standing off from

θεοῦ ζῶντος

the living God

Verse 12 would then literally read, “See to it brothers lest there be in anyone of you an evil heart of unbelief while standing off from the living God.”

The reason I have translated it this way is as follows. The Greek word ἀφίστημι (pronounced aphis-tē-mi), which is in the second aorist infinitive tense, is a contraction of two words, ἀπό (pronounced a-pa) meaning “from”, and ἵστημι (pronounced his-te-me) meaning “to stand”. The preposition ἐν, (pronounced en) meaning “in”, when it comes before the infinitive, makes the infinitive in a construction, that is, a way of speaking in Greek, which is normally translated as “while standing off from”.

Kenneth Wuest says this, that, “The idea is not that of departing, but of standing off from.” Wuest

translates this verse as follows, “Take heed constantly, brethren, lest there be in any one of you a heart perniciously evil with unbelief in standing aloof from the living God”. **Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Volume II, Hebrews in the Greek New Testament, page 78-79, by Kenneth S. Wuest.**

You see, if we don’t translate ἀφίστημι (pronounced aphisēmī) as “departing”, but instead as “while standing off from”, this verse could be referring to one who has never had faith, though he associates himself with the believers. This one may never have been born again in the first place.

Now let’s look at verses 13 and 14 in the original Greek.

Hebrews 3:13 ἀλλὰ παρακαλεῖτε ἑαυτοὺς καθ’ ἑκάστην ἡμέραν

But exhort yourselves each day

ἄχρις οὗ τὸ Σήμερον καλεῖται ἵνα μὴ σκληρυνθῇ τις ἐξ

while the today it is being called lest be hardened one of

ὑμῶν ἀπάτη τῆς ἁμαρτίας

you by the deceit of the sin

The verse would then literally read, “But exhort yourselves each day while it is being called Today, lest one of you be hardened by the deceit of sin.”

This one might never have truly believed in Jesus Christ, and may become even more hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 3:14 μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ Χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν

Sharers for of the Christ we have become

ἐάνπερ τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ὑποστάσεως μέχρι τέλους βεβαίαν

if indeed the beginning of the assurance until the end firm

κατάσχωμεν

we hold fast

The verse would then literally read, “For we have become sharers of Christ if indeed we hold fast the beginning of the assurance which is firm until the end”.

The reason I have translated it this way is as follows. We notice in verse 14 that the Greek word μέτοχοι (pronounced metochoi), means “sharer”, or “partner”. It even has the meaning of “fellow”. Then the Greek word γεγόναμεν (pronounced gegonamen) is in the second perfect active indicative tense, and should therefore be translated “we have become”, and not “we are made” which is in the present indicative tense. Kenneth Wuest says this about this word, that, “The words “are made” are the translation of gegonamen, the perfect of ginomai, a word which means “to become”. The perfect tense in Greek speaks of an action that was completed in past time, having present results. The translation reads, therefore, “For we became partakers of Messiah with the present result that we are partakers of Him”. That is, if these first-century Jews would maintain their faith in Messiah to the end of their lives, that would show that they had become in the past partakers of Messiah, and that as a present result they were partakers of Him. Again as in verse 6, the question is not one of the retention of salvation based upon a persistence of faith, but of the possession of salvation as evidenced by a continuation of faith. The perfect tense reaches back into the past and then speaks of the present. It is not the future of these

Jews that the writer is concerned about here, but he is concerned as to whether in times past and as a result at that time of the writing of the epistle they were partakers of salvation in Messiah.” **Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Volume II, Hebrews in the Greek New Testament, page 80, by Kenneth S. Wuest.**

Now also, the Greek word βεβαίαν, (pronounced be'-bī-an), is in the accusative singular feminine case, and means “firm”. It is an adjective, so it must agree in case with the noun it is modifying. The only noun with the same case that it could be related to here is ἀρχήν, (pronounced ār-khen), which is also in the accusative singular feminine case, and means “beginning”.

Then the Greek word ὑποστάσεως, (pronounced hū-po'-stā-seh-ows), is from a compound of ὑπό (pronounced hupo) meaning “under”, and ἵστημι, (pronounced his-te-me), meaning “to stand”. Vine says that this word literally means “a standing under, support”, “hence an assurance”. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. I., page 85.**

Therefore, the whole phrase “the beginning of the assurance until the end firm” is a construction, the word “firm” modifying the word “beginning” since they alone agree in case, but all the words in between “beginning” and “firm” relate to the same thing. And since the word ἀρχήν (pronounced ār-khen) is in the accusative case, that makes it the direct object of the verb in the sentence, which is the Greek word κατέσχωμεν. (pronounced kataskomen), and means “we hold fast”. Therefore, the whole phrase is the direct object of the verb.

Kenneth Wuest has this further to say regarding this verse, that, “The word “confidence” is the translation of hupostaseos. Its primary meaning is “that on which anything is based”. Hence it takes the sense of hope or confidence. It is the ground of hope they have in Messiah. This word is translated “title deed” in Hebrews 11:1 (“substance” A.V.). The word was used, in secular manuscripts, of the documents bearing on the ownership of a person’s property, deposited in the archives, and forming the evidence of ownership. It therefore was used of that which formed the basis or evidence of one’s assurance of the ownership of anything. Here, it refers to their faith in Messiah, which is their ground of assurance that they are saved. If the faith of these Jews is a heart faith, they will persist in the faith to the end of their lives, despite the persecution which they are enduring. If that faith is a mere intellectual assent, it will not be able to stand up under this persecution, but will be repudiated by that person. The first person is saved, the second unsaved. The phrase “the beginning of our confidence” refers to the incipient confidence they had which had not yet reached its perfection. The words “the end” could refer either to the end of their lives or to the consummation of the whole life of faith.”

He translates the verse as follows, “For we have become participators of Messiah and as a present result are participators of Him, (and that is shown) if we hold the beginning of our assured expectation steadfast to the end.” **Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Volume II, Hebrews in the Greek New Testament, page 81, by Kenneth S. Wuest.**

In other words, what assurance are you holding on to? Are you holding on to “the assurance which is firm until the end”, or are you holding on to something else?

Still, as we read these verses, we are left wondering what exactly the “the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end”, actually is.

As we read these verses with the rest of the chapter, we see that there is some explanation in verses 15 to 19 as we read again in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):**12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; 15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. 16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

Those who provoked were the ones who rebelled. We continue in **Hebrews 3 (KJV):**17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom swore he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

As we continue reading in the next chapter, we begin to have a better understanding of what is meant by the phrase in verse 14 of chapter 3, “the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end”.

Let us continue reading in **Hebrews 4 (KJV)**:1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. 2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Here we begin to see Hebrews 3:12-14 in context. The words “the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end” relate to the gospel that was preached to us. Did we hold ourselves aloof from it in unbelief, and therefore not enter into his rest, or did we mix faith with the word that was preached and enter his rest?

We continue in **Hebrews 4 (KJV)**:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. 4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. 5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. 6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: 7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. 8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

The rest mentioned here is the rest of salvation, for in verse 10 he says that “he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his”. This reminds us of Jesus’ words in **Matthew 11 (KJV)**:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Jesus actually mentions two kinds of rest here. The first is to come to him with our labors and burdens and receive his rest. This is the rest of salvation that comes from simple faith in him as Paul describes in **Romans 10 (KJV)**:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The second rest Jesus speaks of is to take his yoke and learn of him. That is, his yoke speaks of serving in the ministry that God has given each of us. And this serving is easy and light because it is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

An “If” in Hebrews 6:4-6

Now let’s look at **Hebrews 6 (KJV)**:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Hebrews 6:4 Ἀδύνατον γὰρ τοὺς ἅπαξ φωτισθέντας

Impossible for those who once were being enlightened

γευσάμενους τε τῆς δωρεᾶς τῆς ἐπουρανίου καὶ μετόχους
who were tasting of the gift of the heavens and sharers

γενηθέντας πνεύματος ἁγίου
who were becoming of (the) Spirit Holy

Hebrews 6:5 καὶ καλὸν γευσάμενους θεοῦ ῥῆμα δυνάμεις τε
And good who were tasting of God word and powerful deeds
μέλλοντος αἰῶνος
of a coming age

Hebrews 6:6 καὶ παραπεσόντας, πάλιν ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν
And were falling away, again to renew unto repentance

ἀνασταυροῦντας ἑαυτοῖς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ
are crucifying again for themselves the son of God and

παραδειγματίζοντας
putting (him) to open shame

These verses would then literally read:

Hebrews 6:4 For it is impossible for those who once were being enlightened, who were tasting of the gift of the heavens, and who were becoming sharers of (the) Holy Spirit 5 And who were tasting of (the) good word of God, and of powerful deeds of a coming age 6 And were falling away, to renew (them) again unto repentance who are crucifying again for themselves the son of God and putting (him) to open shame.

It seems clear to me that the ones spoken of here have never actually completed the deal. That is, they have never actually come to believe in Jesus Christ and be born a gain, which is the one condition for salvation. They were in process, that is, they “being enlightened”, they “were tasting”, they “were becoming sharers”, and they “were falling away”. but they never actually came to the point of saving grace and receiving faith to believe in the one who is above all.

We now turn to another possible Scripture that could be used to support the assertion that the grace of God has an “if”.

An “If” in Hebrews 10:26-31

Hebrews 10 (KJV):26 For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, 27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. 28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a

fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The Scripture in verse 29 above is speaking of one who was sanctified, and not one who is being sanctified. The Greek word used here for sanctified is ἡγιασθη, (pronounced hegiasteh), which is in the third person, singular, aorist 1, indicative passive tense. This verb is not in a participle form, when the action would be continuous as the verbs in Hebrews 6:4-6 were. The aorist indicative in verse 29 indicates an action that was completed in the past. The one here spoken of had come to saving faith in Jesus Christ, but went astray from the will of God. He did “despite” unto the Spirit of grace, or he insulted the Spirit of grace. The word “despite” in the Greek is ἐνυβρίσας, (pronounced enubrisas), and means “to insult”. And again, we read in verse 30 that, “The Lord shall judge his people”. The Lord judges His people, not those who are on the outside. We will look at how God disciplines His own shortly.

Let us look at one more Scripture that could be used to support the assertion that the grace of God has an “if”.

An “If” in Romans 11:22

Romans 11 (KJV):22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

In Romans, chapter 11, Paul is explaining the state of Israel in the present Church age. We begin reading in Romans 11 (KJV):1 I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel saying, 3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. 4 But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. 5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

God “has not cast away His people whom He foreknew”, as in verse 2. That is, “at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace”, as in verse 5. Israel is portrayed as an olive tree, and the Gentiles are portrayed as wild olives as we pick up in **Romans 11 (KJV):16** For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; 18 Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. 19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. 20 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: 21 For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. 22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Verse 22 could be referring to the sin unto death in 1 John 5:16-17 which we will look at shortly. This chapter of Romans is explaining where Israel is in God’s plans and purposes. It is also a warning to unsaved Gentiles to believe in Him or perish.

Now all Israel will be saved as we continue to read in **Romans 11 (KJV):23** And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? 25 For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. 26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

Paul is using the analogy of an olive tree to describe the present state of Israel. And when Israel strayed into unbelief, they were disciplined by God. Some may never had faith, and were cut off. Others may have had faith, but strayed into idolatry and were cut off in physical death.

It is at this point that we must look at what the Scripture says about salvation. Why do we need to be

saved, and then, how are we saved? This will help us understand the Scriptures above, and put them in the proper context with the rest of Scripture.

The Reason We Need to Be Saved

Our first father, Adam, sinned as we know from **Genesis 3 (KJV)**:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? 2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: 3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. 4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: 5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. 6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. 7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. 8 And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

Adam's sin brought shame as we continue to read in **Genesis 3 (KJV)**:9 And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? 10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. 11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

The first blame shifting is now recorded as we continue in **Genesis 3 (KJV)**:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. 13 And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

There were consequences as we continue in **Genesis 3 (KJV)**:14 And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

But the Lord is gracious and spoke of a seed that would come and bruise the head of the serpent, a prophecy of Christ, as we continue in **Genesis 3 (KJV)**:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

There were more consequences of Adam's sin as we continue in **Genesis 3 (KJV)**:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. 20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.

The Lord God covered man's sin, but placed an angel to guard the way of the tree of life as we read in **Genesis 3 (KJV)**:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. 22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The whole reason why we need a Savior is because of Adam's sin as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV)**:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Adam, as our first father, plunged the whole human race into death because of sin as we read in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV)**:21 For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

And so, before we come to Christ, we are dead in trespasses and sins as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV)**:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

We were dead in our trespasses and sins. This speaks of spiritual death. The word “quickened” means “made alive”. We were made alive in our spirits. Now this spiritual death was the result of Adam’s sin, for God told Adam that in the day that he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die as we read in **Genesis 2 (KJV)**:16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

As a result of Adam’s sin, the whole human race is now in possession of a sinful nature that is on the downgrade, and from which it is impossible to free itself apart from Christ as we read in **Romans 1 (KJV)**:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Not only so, but man’s condition is further stated in **Romans 3 (KJV)**:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: 11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. 12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

The word “unprofitable” in the Greek is ἡχρηώθησαν, (pronounced ehkreothesan), which is in the third person plural aorist 1, indicative passive form of ἀχρηιόω, (pronounced achreiōō), and means “to make useless, render unserviceable”. “The Hebrew word here means “to go bad, become sour like milk””. **Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Volume I, Romans in the Greek New Testament, page 55, by Kenneth S. Wuest.**

In other words, we were as fruit spoiled rotten before we came to Christ. And this applies to all men and women, without exception as we read further in **Romans 3 (KJV)**:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

The word “heart” in the Hebrew is לֵב, (pronounced leb), and means inner part, relating to the center of anything. Man’s heart is desperately wicked as Jeremiah states in **Jeremiah 17 (KJV)**:9 The heart is deceitful

above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Man's whole being is sadly affected by sin as we read in **Titus 1 (KJV):15** Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

Though man seems to be capable of doing some good, everything he does is tainted by his sin which alienates him from God as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):18** Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

In this state, he is a mere natural man as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 2 (KJV):14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Man's mind must be enlightened by the Holy Spirit before he can know the truth of the Gospel. Man needs a total makeover in order to have fellowship with God again. Man needs to be saved.

We Must Be Born Again

Now the death spoken of in Genesis was not limited to the physical death of the body, but was also spiritual in its effect. We were spiritually dead in our spirit. That is, we had no fellowship with our creator. Our spirit is where we have fellowship with God as we see in **Proverbs 20 (KJV):27** The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

Now, we know from the Scripture that man is composed of three parts, body, soul, and spirit as we read in **1 Thessalonians 5 (KJV):23** And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That there is a difference between soul and spirit is revealed in **Hebrews 4 (KJV):12** For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

That we have a spirit is also revealed in **Romans 8 (KJV):16** The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Now, it is evident that it was in our spirit that we were spiritually dead, for it is in our spirit that we must be born again as Jesus reveals in **John 3 (KJV):3** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

We must be born of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus is speaking with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and He was explaining to him the new birth that is necessary for all men and women in order to see or enter the kingdom of God. Jesus explains that there are two births, one of flesh, and one which is of the spirit. All of us have been born of water, that is, of the flesh. Otherwise you wouldn't be reading this. But not all have been born of the Spirit. And Jesus says in verse 6 above that "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit". Therefore the new birth is in our spirits.

How We Are Saved

Man must repent. We must go through the doorway of repentance before we are born again as Jesus says in **Luke 13 (KJV):1** There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all

likewise perish.

The word “repent” in the Greek in Luke 13:3 is μετανοῆτε (pronounced metanoete). This word is composed of two words, μετά, (pronounced meta), meaning in context here “to change”, and νοέω, (pronounced no-eh-o), meaning mind. The word means to have a change of mind about something. In the context of Scripture, it means to change our mind about our sin, and about Jesus Christ, and to agree with God. In the Hebrew, the word for “repent” is שׁוּב, (pronounced shoob), and means “to turn back, to return”. We must go through this process of changing our mind about our sin, and about who Jesus Christ is. And we must turn to the Lord in surrender. It is at this place where we may receive Him, and be born again.

Repentance was foremost in Jesus’ preaching as we read in **Mark 1 (KJV):14** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

It was also foremost in the apostle’s preaching as we read in **Acts 2 (KJV):38** Then Peter said unto them, 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.

It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance as we read in **Romans 2 (KJV):4** Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Now Jesus explains this process in **Matthew 13 (KJV):1** The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; 4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: 5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: 8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. 9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Jesus then explains the parable of the sower in **Matthew 13 (KJV):18** Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. 19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. 23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The first kind of hearer was not saved, for the wicked one snatched away the word that was sown in his heart. The second hearer received the word, and was therefore saved, but tribulation or persecution caused him to fall away. The third hearer received the word also, and was therefore saved, yet he was full of the care of this world and concern for riches, and he became unfruitful. The fourth kind of hearer was saved, and bore fruit.

So as the word is preached, we go through a process of repentance. Our minds are enlightened with the truth of the Gospel by the word that is preached as we see in **Hebrews 6 (KJV):4** For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. 7 For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: 8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

The process of repentance begins with the enlightening of our minds with the Gospel. But this is only the beginning, a first step in the process.

After our minds are enlightened with the truth about Christ, that He died for our sins, and was raised

again so that we also might live, our emotions will be touched as we see in the story Jesus told of the two men who went to the temple to pray in **Luke 18 (KJV):10** Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

The publican “smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner”. The publican had eyes to see and ears to hear the Gospel, and his emotions were touched, and he repented, and was saved. The Pharisee only appeared to repent, going to the temple to pray, and fasting and giving tithes. But he was really the one who was “standing afar off” in his heart. The heart is the center of man’s emotions, and is what God wants the most from us.

The New Birth

Now Jesus explains that what is born of the Spirit is spirit. That is, it is necessary for our spirit to be born again of the Spirit in order for us to see and enter the kingdom of God. This is a requirement Jesus says in **John 3 (KJV):7**, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

This new birth is also described by the apostle John in **John 1 (KJV):12** But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

John says that it is as many as received him who were born of God, even to those who believe on his name. Our hearts are made ready through the work of the Holy Spirit in repentance. Then, when we receive, or surrender, to the word of God, we are born again. Our spirits are made alive to God.

Now we understand from John 1:12 that this birth did not come about by the will of man, but by the will of God. Think about it. We did not have anything to do with our physical birth. And it is God who gives us spiritual rebirth. That is, the Holy Spirit begins by enlightening our minds with the Gospel, and then opens our hearts to believe as He did with Lydia in **Acts 16 (KJV):14** And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

It is the Holy Spirit who opens our heart to believe in Jesus Christ, and gives us faith by which we are born again. This renewing of the Holy Spirit is also spoken of in **Titus 3 (KJV):5** Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

The term “regeneration” means rebirth. The phrase “washing of regeneration” refers to the sanctification that happens when we are born again. We are sanctified or cleansed, that is, we are forgiven of all our sin for all time and eternity when we are born again. That is, we have a standing as holy ones, or saints as in **Romans 1 (KJV):7** To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word in Greek for “saints” is ἅγιοις, (pronounced hageeois), and simply means “holy ones”. It is the same word that is used in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):2** Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

The word “sanctified” is a derivative of the Greek word ἅγιοις, (pronounced hageeois), for saints. This word “sanctified” in the Greek is ἡγιασμένοις, (hegeasmenois), and is the perfect passive participle of the verb ἁγιάζω, (pronounced hagiadzō). It means “to separate, consecrate, cleanse, purify, sanctify, regard or reverence as holy”, **The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised 1978 Edition, by Moulton.**

Members of the Church of God are called “saints” as in **2 Corinthians 1 (KJV):1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: 2 Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the same address Paul gives to the Ephesus church as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The point is, when we are saved we are placed by God into the body of Christ as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):13** For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

It is God who sets the members of the body in a particular place as we read in **1 Corinthians 12 (KJV):18** But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

As members of the body of Christ, we are now temples of the Holy Spirit and we are not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):19** What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Though we were once the worst of the worst, we now have been washed, sanctified, and justified as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV):11** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

The Sinful Nature in our Flesh

Even though we have a standing before God as ones who have been washed, sanctified, and justified, and God treats us as sons and daughters, this does not mean that we have already been made perfect. We have been born again in our spirits, but we still have a sinful nature in our flesh. When we were unsaved, we were not only spiritually dead, but we walked according to the course of this world and the prince of the power of the air, that is Satan, and we were by nature children of wrath, as we read in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):2** Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

We were children of disobedience. As unsaved, and unregenerated people, we were spiritually dead, and in possession of a sinful nature that was in our flesh. Since we as Christians are not perfect yet, we still have this sinful nature as Christians, as Paul explains in **Romans 7 (KJV):14** For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul is speaking as a Christian, for there was a part of him that would do good. Even though he has been born again, he still had sin in his flesh. Now we know that we are new creations as a result of our new birth in Christ as we read in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Though we are new creations in our spirit, we still have sin in our flesh as Paul continues in **Romans 7 (KJV):21** I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall

deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

We did not delight in the law of God after the inward man before we were saved. And now, after we have been born again, though we still have sin in our flesh, we do not have to yield to it as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (NASB)**:1 Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Because the Holy Spirit is now the life of our spirits as born again Christians, we are made free from the law of sin and death in our bodies. We do not have to yield to the sin, which is in our members. Now we have a choice, whether we will live for God, or let our fleshly desires rule us. This is why Paul tells us we must put off the old man and put on the new as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV)**:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil. 28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

If we sin now that we have been born again, we have an advocate with the Father as John reveals in **1 John 2 (KJV)**:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

John is speaking to his spiritual sons and daughters in the faith, those he has raised up and is accountable for before the Lord. John has explained in chapter one of his epistle how to deal with our sin as we read in **1 John 1 (KJV)**:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

As Christians we must fill ourselves with His word, the word of God. As we do this He will give us more light. As we receive more light, we must walk in that light, confessing our sins, and He will be faithful and just to forgive us our sins because Jesus is the propitiation or the atoning sacrifice for our sins. There is only one way to deal with sin in our lives, and that is to confess it in Jesus' name. As we do this, our soul is cleansed. Our mind, will, our emotions, our heart are cleansed from sin and we progress from children to young men and women to fathers and mothers in the Lord.

This is a lifelong process whereby, as we put off and put on, we are progressively sanctified in our mind, our will, and our emotions, which make up our soul. We are already perfect in our spirit.

Now we must remember that we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, unto the day of redemption. That is, we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God until the redemption of the purchased possession as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV)**:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

The word "earnest" in verse 14 in the Greek is ἀρραβών, (pronounced arrabōn), and means "earnest or pledge". The word "redemption" in verse 14 in the Greek is ἀπολύτρωσιν, (pronounced apolutrosin), means "a releasing, for (i.e. on payment of) a ransom", **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III., page 264.**

We have been bought with a price and we are not our own as we read in **1 Corinthians 6 (KJV)**:19

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Now the same Greek word for “redemption” is also used in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):30** And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Another Greek word however is used in **Galatians 3 (KJV):13** Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

The Greek word for “redeemed” here in verse 13 is ἐξηγόρασεν, (pronounced exehgorasen), which is the aorist active indicative of ἐξαγοράζω, (pronounced exagoradzō), and is “a strengthened form of αγοράζω,” (pronounced agoradzo), which means “to buy”. It denotes to buy out, (ἐξ pronounced ex) meaning out, and agorazō, (pronounced agoradzo), meaning “to buy”. **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III., page 263.** In other words, when Christ redeemed us, He purchased us by paying our ransom for sin, and bought us out of the market place, keeping us from further sale.

Now we are sealed unto the day of redemption as we read again in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):30** And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The “day of redemption” is the day when God will come for his possessions. That is, He will come at the resurrection of the just, when we will be glorified and made like Him as the apostle John says in **1 John 3 (KJV):2** Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

It is at this time that our bodies will be made incorruptible as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 15 (KJV):50** Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

Our bodies are mortal or doomed to die now. But at the resurrection, if we are still alive on this earth, our bodies will be changed to be incorruptible, that is, incapable of death. We will put on immortality. This is also when we will be glorified as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. 29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

What Does It Mean to Be Justified?

Now we read in Titus 3:7 that we are “justified by his grace” as in **Titus 3 (KJV):7** That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

This relates to a justification that God does when one first believes in Jesus Christ as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):33** Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

The fact that this justification happens when we are born again is revealed in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The words “being justified” are a translation of the Greek word Δικαιοθέντες, (pronounced dekiothentes), which is in the aorist passive participle tense. The aorist is the past tense form of verbs in the Greek. Therefore, we may also translate this as the New American Standard Bible does in **Romans 5 (NASB):1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

After our justification, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The words “we have

peace” are the Greek words εἰρήνην ἔχομεν (pronounced eirene echomen). The word “have” is in the present tense meaning we have it now. The word “peace” in the Greek means “at one again”, **Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, W.E. Vine, Vol. III., page 169**. We are set at one again with our Creator when we are justified.

Notice in verse 2 above that it says “we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand”. The word “obtained” is also in the past tense, so we now stand in grace.

Therefore, our justification is done by God when we are born again, and is then an event in our past that happened when we believed in Jesus Christ.

Now, when God justifies us, He imputes to us the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ as we read in **Romans 3 (KJV):21** But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

This “righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ” is “unto all and upon all them that believe”. God is “just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”. That this righteousness is the righteousness of Christ is revealed in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):30** But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. This righteousness of Jesus Christ comes by faith to us, just as it did to Abraham. Speaking of Abraham, Paul says in **Romans 4 (KJV):19** And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: 20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; 24 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; 25 Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

To justify means to “declare righteous”. To “impute” means “to put down to one’s account, to reckon”. When we believe in Jesus Christ, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us. That is, it was reckoned to us, or put down to our account. Therefore, when God justifies us, we have a standing before Him as sons and daughters, and there is now no condemnation as we read in **Romans 8 (KJV):1** There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

The phrase, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”, was added by the King James translators, and is not in the original Greek. The New American Standard Bible has correctly remove it as we read in **Romans 8 (NASB):1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

The one who hears and believes has everlasting life, and is not condemned as Jesus states in **John 3 (KJV):17** For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The reason he or she who believes is not condemned is because we are justified by God when He sees our faith as we read in **Romans 5 (KJV):1** Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

The word “peace”, as we said before, in the Greek is εἰρήνην, (pronounced eirenen), and it means “to be set at one with”. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are born again, and we are justified and declared righteous by God, and we are set at one with Him.

After we are set at one with Him, there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from Him as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that

condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This does not mean that we are perfect now. Justification is a legal term, and relates to our standing before God. It is to be without blame before God as we read in **Ephesians 1 (KJV):4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

He has “made us accepted in the beloved”. Now there may be much in our soul, that is our mind, will, and emotions, that still needs to be cleansed. But our spirit is where we have been made alive as Paul says in **Ephesians 2 (NASB):4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The word “works” relates to anything that we do. Even our faith is the gift of God. Now when we realize that God has made us alive together with Christ, we understand that the life we have received from Him is eternal life since we have been given birth by the Holy Spirit. Not only so, but we have also received a new nature in our spirits which have been born again of the Spirit of God, as Peter reveals in **2 Peter 1 (KJV):4** Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The Spirit of God imbues our Spirit with His life, and His attributes, so that we can boldly say that we are now the children of God, and we delight to do His will after the inward man or woman. The apostle John speaks of our present status as children of God in **1 John 3 (KJV):1** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Again John wants us to know that we now have eternal life as we read in **1 John 5 (KJV):13** These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

We are dead to sin, and our new life is now hidden with Christ in God, being raised with Christ, as Paul reveals in **Colossians 3 (KJV):1** If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

We are new creations as a result of our new birth as we read again in **2 Corinthians 5 (KJV):17** Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Maintaining Our Fellowship with the Father

Being born again, we are now responsible to maintain our fellowship with our Father. We are not to be conformed to this world any longer as Paul tells us in **Romans 12 (KJV):1** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your

reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

We are to walk in the light of His word as John says in **1 John 1 (KJV):6** If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

John is talking to believers in these verses for he calls us his children in **1 John 2 (KJV):1** My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

We must keep short accounts with God in order to maintain our fellowship with Him. We must put Him first in our lives, and as we read and study His word, and we receive more light, we must then put off what His word reveals to us moment by moment. We can do this as we remember we have been justified by Him, and set at one with Him, and made acceptable in the beloved by Him.

Now as we do this, we are walking in the light, and He cleanses us in our mind, will, and emotions. We will then also experience and feel God's presence in our lives. This is what it means to have fellowship one with another. We experience the love of God in fellowship with other believers. The more we are in His word, the more this can happen.

God does not expect us to be ninety-day wonders. As we maintain our fellowship with God our Father, we will then grow in grace and knowledge as Peter encourages in **2 Peter 3 (KJV):18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

We are to grow up in Him in all things as we read in **Ephesians 4 (KJV):15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.

This growth is what John is talking about in **1 John 2 (KJV):12** I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

When we first come to Christ, we are as little children rejoicing in sins forgiven. As we grow in Christ, we become as young men and women, who are strong, having overcome the wicked one. As we continue to grow in grace and knowledge, we become fathers in the Lord, knowing Him who is from the beginning.

Becoming Mature Believers in Christ

Now as we grow in this way, we will also become spiritual. When we are newborns, there may be much in our lives that is not pleasing to God. We are babes in Christ as Paul reveals in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV):1** And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. 2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. 3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

To be a "babe" in Christ does not mean we are not saved, or that we are almost saved. Some would say that these Corinthians were not even saved. But they will be hard pressed to explain how Paul addresses them in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV):1** Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, 2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: 3 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; 5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; 6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: 7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

The testimony, Paul says, was confirmed in them by the gifts of the Spirit, which they had received, for they came behind in no gift, even though Paul issues corrections in how they were operating the gifts of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians, chapters 12 to 14. They were still children in their experience as Paul continues in **1 Corinthians 1 (KJV)**:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Paul explains more about what he means by “carnal” as we now return to read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? 6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Paul continues as he explains that, even though they were in this carnal stage of growth in Christ, the Spirit of God still dwelt in them, for they are the temple of God as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 3 (KJV)**:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. 11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. 16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Now notice that the one who builds on the foundation gold, silver, and precious stones will have a work that will stand the test of fire, and he will have a reward, speaking of a reward for his labor in the Lord, over and above the reward of salvation. The Lord has placed us in His body as it pleased Him, and we are to perform a specific function according to the place He has set us in His body, and do the works He has ordained for us to walk in. We will be rewarded for performing that function, which will build up the body of Christ.

Now also notice that the one who builds on the foundation wood, hay, or stubble will have a work which will not abide the test of fire in the day of judgment. Yet he will still be saved, yet “so as by fire”. That is, he will suffer for the choices he makes in this life, but he will still be saved and will have no rewards other than his blood bought salvation.

God's Discipline

God is a good father and disciplines every son and daughter He receives as we know from **Hebrews 12 (KJV)**:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Now we are given a clue as to what form this chastening will take as we read 1 Corinthians, chapter 11. Not only were there divisions among the Corinthian believers, but they were also eating the Lord's Supper in an

unworthy manner as we begin reading in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? what shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not.

Paul then recounts what he had taught them about the Lord's Supper as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. 25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Paul then warns the Corinthians about this as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

The word for "damnation" in verse 29 in the Greek is κρίμα, (pronounced krima), and simply means "judgment".

Paul then explains that this is the reason why some of them are weak and sickly, and even sleep, that is, suffer physical death, as we continue to read in **1 Corinthians 11 (KJV):**30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. 33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.

So we see that God's chastening may allow sickness and disease in a believer's life as a result of our yielding to the flesh, the old sinful nature in us. Walking in the flesh, that is, in carnality, can also bring about a chastening of God that results in physical death. This is known as the sin unto death which is revealed in **1 John 5 (KJV):**16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. 18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

That is, we do not sin in our spirits. But when we yield to our flesh, we sin in our soul and we must then confess our sin to be cleansed.

Examples of the Sin unto Death

An example of the sin unto death is found in the life of Saul. Dr. Albert Grimes has written about this in his **Book 7, The Security of the Believer**.

"Saul is an Old Testament example of a New Testament sin unto death spoken of in 1 John 5:16,17, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."

Saul committed this sin when he sought counsel of one with a familiar spirit in 1 Samuel 28:7, "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor."

Some teach that after this event when God rejected him, that he committed suicide. It is evident

that Saul did try to kill himself, as in 1 Samuel 31:4, "...Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it." But he did not kill himself, but an Amalekite slew him in 2 Samuel 1:9, "He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me: for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me." And at this request he killed Saul, 2 Samuel 1:10, "So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen..."

But the conclusion of Saul's death is revealed in this sense, that the Lord actually slew him, because he had committed the sin unto death. This sin relates to physical death, as in 1 Chronicles 10:13,14, "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; 14 And enquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

Then in 2 Samuel 7:15, "But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee."

What happened to Saul after his death, is clearly evident, as in 1 Samuel 28:19, "Moreover the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines." Samuel was allowed of God, to come up from the underworld from Paradise. Saul went to the same place, according to Samuel's own statement."

Another example is evident in the death of Ananias in **Acts 5 (KJV):** 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

Ananias' sin was lying to the Holy Ghost, for he did not lie to men "but unto God" as in verse 4. Sapphira, his wife, also died for this as we continue to read in **Acts 5 (KJV):** 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. 12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

Now we notice in verse 12 that this was a time when "by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people". To whom much is given, much is required.

Conclusion

We know that all Scripture is inspired by God as we read in **2 Timothy 3 (KJV):** 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

The epistle to the Romans makes it clear that if we believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord, we will be saved as we read again in **Romans 10 (KJV):** 8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the

dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

The Gospel of John says the same as we read in **John 3 (KJV):14** And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

It is a simple faith in Jesus Christ that gives us life as we read in **John 5 (KJV):24** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Our salvation is not a gradual thing. Once we believe in Jesus Christ, we are born again, and pass from death to life. This is the salvation faith that is given to us by the grace of God in **Ephesians 2 (KJV):8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Once we believe in Jesus Christ, He becomes our wisdom, and our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. We have then been bought with a price, and we are not our own. We have a standing before Him as sons and daughters. We have also been placed in the body of Christ, sovereignly by God, when we believe. We are then said to be “in Christ”, and we are members of His body. We are also sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise unto the day of redemption. There is nothing in all creation that can separate us from God’s love. No one can condemn us for God has justified us. And God is for us as Paul reveals in **Romans 8 (KJV):31** What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

We are not perfect yet, and God is a good father who disciplines those He loves. We should not forget the warning in **Hebrews 10 (KJV):30** For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Let us also remember that our God is a consuming fire as in Hebrews 12 (KJV):28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire.

And we should also always remember that all things are open and laid bare before Him with whom we have to do as we read in **Hebrews 4 (NASB):13** And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

We cannot hide from God. We must be careful to walk in fellowship with Him moment by moment. We cannot lose our salvation, though we could lose our rewards.

Now the only “if” relating to grace in the Bible is if we believe in Jesus Christ or if we do not. The other “ifs” relate to our obedience, and our maintaining our fellowship with the one who saved us. We must heed the scripture in **2 Corinthians 13 (NASB):5** Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?

But again, the epistle to the Romans makes it clear that if we believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and we confess Him as Lord, we will be saved as in **Romans 10 (KJV):8** But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.